With best compliments from

Mr. R. M. Chopra
A. Chopra & Company
678, Marshall House
25, Strand Road, Kolkata - 700 001
Phone : 2230 2678/2862
Mobile : 9830570337
E-mail : ravimchopra@gmail.com

RUMI

HIS TEACHINGS AND PHILOSOPHY

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By

R.M. CHOPRA

M.A., LLB.

Del PO:Fateganj HO<390002>

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New Delhi

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While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the publishers and the author accept no responsibility for errors and omissions, however caused.

Author
R.M. CHOPRA
678, Marshall House
25, Strand Road, Kolkata – 700001
Phone: 2230-2678/2862, Mob: 9830570337
*E-mail” **ravimchopra@gmail.com***

Co-ordinated by
Shiv Rahul Chopra, Sonu Chopra, Suhail, Aakriti

Cover and design
Dr.Anu Chopra Dhawan

First Edition – 2007
Second Revised Edition 2018
ISBN NO.: 978-93-88278-09-6
Rs. 800/-, US $ 32, Euro 28, Pound 24

Printed & Published by
Anuradha Prakashan
1193, Pankha Road, Nangal Raya,
New Delhi-110046 (India)
email : anuradhaprakashan@gmail.com
Tel.: 011-28520555, Mob.: 9213135921

To
ANU MINU SHIVI

Persian Quotation Rumi

خوشتر آں باشد که سرِ دلبراں
گفته آید در حدیثِ دیگراں

رومیؔ

"Khushtrān bāshad keh sarr-i-dilbarān
Gufta āyad dar hadis-i-digarān."

- Rumi

Secrets of the Beloved are a great delight to find,
One's own thoughts in an other mind.

- Rumi

PREFACE
TO THE REVISED EDITION

Maulana Jalaluddin Muhammad Rumi (1207-1273 A.D.) was a mystical thirteenth century Persian Sufi poet, jurist and theologian. He believed passionately in the use of music, poetry and dancing as a path for reaching the Ultimate Reality. For Rumi, music helped devotees to focus their whole being on the Divine. It was from these ideas that the practice of Whirling Dervishes developed into a ritual.

Rumi's importance is considered to transcend national and ethnic borders. The Persian world, which are extended from Turkey to India, looks upon Rumi as one of the greatest spiritual poets in history. He has had a significant influence on the Persian and Turkish literature since the thirteenth century A.D. Over the last about one hundred years, Rumi's poetry has spread from the Islamic world and into the Western World. The lyrical beauty of his outpourings of love for the Divine have caught up the imagination of the West which have helped to make him one of the most popular and best-selling poets in America and some other countries in the West. This is so because Rumi's poetry embraces all cultures, nationalities and mythologies. People of all denominations read the poetry of Rumi without feeling as though he is imposing any orthodox beliefs upon them.

Rumi, in fact, integrates themes and myths from multiple religious traditions into a universal expression of Divine Love. His writings resound with tolerance, goodness, charity, understanding, fellowship, and awareness through love. In doing so, he does not offend anyone, but includes everyone. The world of Rumi is neither exclusively the world of a Sufi, nor the world of any religious denomination; it is the highest state of a human being – a fully evolved human.

The writings of Rumi are timeless and quite relevant even today. Therein lies the importance of Rumi especially in the context of modern world where the need of this understanding is felt all the more.

This monograph was written by me in 2007 to mark the occasion of 800th Birth Anniversary of Rumi. Because of the tremendous interest generated, coupled with great demand, has necessitated this second revised edition which is now published. It is hoped that this revised edition will not only meet the requirements of lovers of Rumi's writings, but also of the academicians, students and all those who are interested in knowing about Rumi's teachings and philosophy.

R.M. CHOPRA

November 2018
Kolkata

RUMI :
HIS TEACHINGS AND PHILOSOPHY

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INTRODUCTION

In the history of mankind many luminous stars have embellished the spiritual firmament one among them has been **Jalaluddin Rumi,** commonly known as **Maulana Rumi** or **Maulavi Rumi,** the greatest mystical poet of Persian literature, whose eight-hundredth birth anniversary falls on the 30th September, 2007.

Maulana Rumi heralded the cause of Sufism at a time when the Mongol hordes had wreaked havoc in Asia and people were groping in the dark and striving arduously in search of the Truth and its realization. Consequences arrived at by him, and the findings made by him, were based more on his personal experiments rather than on theoratical knowledge in the field of realization. He took the religious scriptures as his base and main prop and, at the same time , relied on the findings of earlier spiritual preceptors of the East as well as of the West. After his meeting with **Shamsuddin Tabrizi,** he experienced ecstasy and complete inward transformatiopn. His personal experiences of this truth inspired the great mystical revival in Iran and the Anatolian Peninsula. He was acclaimed as the resuscitator of the dormant Divinity of man by erealizing which humanity throughout the world could be brought into the orbit of one family of God. He delivered a message of hope, love, faith, brotherhood, fellowship, amity, understanding, peace and charity throughout the world.

The message of **Maulana Rumi,** delivered over seven hundred years ago, is quite relevant today when mankind, in the vastly changed scenario, is still striving to find common grounds of meeting. The essence of all major religions is to reach God, or the Truth, or the Absolute Reality. All the religions are like different rivers flowing into the same Sea. They may have different ways, but their destination is the same. In this context, Maulana Rumi's message is still extremely relevant as it can feed a dearth of spiritualism at present experienced by mankind.

Besides bringing Maulana Rumi's love of humanity, spirituality and philosophy to the thirstier people, the object in publishing this book is also to pay my humble tribute to this greatest mystical poet of Islam on his eight-hundredth birth anniversary whose love of God and humanity has been a source of great strength, happiness and satisfaction to me. In his quintessential saying I have always found a healing touch and refreshment upon mind and spirit. I can only hope that this book will enable many others to derive the same benefits.

Hama düst, "all are friends"** is the necessary consequence of **Hama Ü-st, "all is He."

CHAPTER - I

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Jalaluddin Muhammad, widely known by his sobriquet Maulana in Iran, Afghanistan and Indian sub-continent, and popularly known as Mevlana in Turkey, was born on 30th September, 1207 to BahauddinWalad of Balkh, a theologian, a jurist and a mystic, who was a well-established scholar. Because of his erudition, followers of Bahauddin referred to him as '***Sultan al-Ulema***' – the Sultan of Scholars. The popular hagiographical assertions that have claimed the family descent from the Caliph Abu Bakr do not hold on closer scrutiny, according to some scholars.(1) Similarly, the claim of maternal descent from Khwarizmshah for Rumi, or his father, is seen as a non-historical hagiographical tradition only to connect the family with royalty.(2)

Bahauddin himself was born about 1148 A.D. His father was a noted scholar and divine. Brought up in the traditional atmosphere of Sunni orthodoxy, Bahauddin acquired such a reputation as a teacher and preacher that he was conferred the title of '*Sultan al-Ulema'*. He was also a Sufi mystic following in the footsteps of the great Muhammad al-Ghazali of Tus (d.1111 A.D.). This combination of profound theological and theosophical learning won for him high repute and esteem as a religious preceptor.

As his reputation and influence began to spread around and as gradually many followers gathered round him, Bahauddin began his preaching from 1208 A.D. and urged upon his followers to study the Quran and to practice the precepts of Islam, always denouncing the philosophers and rationalists of the time. This brought him into collision with his contemporary Fakhruddin al-Razi (born 1149 A.D.), also known as Imam Razi, the famous Muslim philosopher. Echoes of the hostility between these two men, competitors for royal favour, are to be found in Bahauddin's book *Ma'arif (Gnosis*). It is commonly believed that Fakhruddin al-Razi was the cause of the Khwarizmshah's turning against the Sufis, in general, and Bahauddin, in particular. It is further alleged that al-Razi's enmity led to Bahauddin's precipitate flight from Balkh in 1212 A.D. Because of his great attraction for his birth-place, Bahauddin later returned to Balkh. He could not stay there for long as some of the courtiers maligned him before the king, calling him an intriguer and a seditionist who had designs on the throne. The king sent for Bahauddin, who readily agreed to leave the country, so as to remove from the king's mind all misgivings on this score.

He accordingly quitted Balkh in 1219 A.D., a year before the Mongol invasion, with a band of about forty followers, after delivering a public address in the great mosque before the king and the people. In his address he foretold of the doom of the town of Balkh in the hands of the barbaric Mongol invaders. His words proved prophetic when Mongols stormed Balkh in 1220 A.D. under their leader Chengiz Khan and ravaged the township. A graphic description of terrible event from which Bahauddin and his young son so narrowly escaped has been given by the famous Sufi

Najmuddin Kubra who ran from those regions not long after Bahauddin himself. "It was in the year 1220", he writes, "that the God-forsaken army of the Tartar infidels, may God forsake and destroy them, gained the mastery over those territories. The confusion and slaughter, that followed at the hands of those accursed creatures were such as had never before been witnessed in any age, whether in the lands of heathendom or Islam. How could slaughter ever be vaster than this that they wrought from the gate of Turkistan to the gate of Syria and Rum, wherein they laid waste so many cities and provinces, so that in one city alone – Rai, where I myself was born and brought up – it has been estimated that 7,00,000 mortals were slain or made captive."

In 1219, a year before Mongols invaded Balkh, with a band of about forty followers and his whole family, Bahauddin set out westwards. At the time of flight from Balkh Jalaluddin was a boy of twelve, already well-grounded in his father's learning and piety, old enough to remember in after years his childhood environments, reminiscences of which are to be found scattered here and there in his poetry and discourses.

Bahauddin had three children, the eldest of them was a daughter, then Alauddin, a son two years older to Jalaluddin who was the youngest child. Bahauddin made his way first to Nishapur, all too soon to share the horrible fate of Balkh, and, it is said, there he called upon the venerable poet and mystic Fariduddin Attar. This is according to hagiographical account, it was at Nishapur that Fariduddin recognizing in young Jalaluddin the signs of spiritual greatness gave to Jalaluddin a copy of his ***Asrar-Nameh*** or "the

Book of Secrets". The book is about the entanglement of the soul in the material world. This meeting had a deep impact on the young boy of about fourteen and the book, later on, proved to be a great source of inspiration for his great work.(3)

From Nishapur BahauddinWalad went to Baghdad, meeting many scholars and Sufis there.(4) From Baghdad they went to perform Hajj. The rites of the pilgrimage duly completed, Bahauddin now led his spiritually refreshed party to Damascus, and next to Malatia, Erzincan, Sivas and Nigde. They finally settled in Karaman where Rumi's mother and brother both died. In 1225, when Jalaluddin was eighteen years old, he was married to Gauhar Khatun, daughter of Lala Sharfuddin, presumably a member of the fugitive party. To this union two sons were born Alauddin and Bahauddin Sultan Walad. It was Bahauddin Sultan Walad, who would later compose a poetical biography of his father and, in all possibility, edited his scattered discourses. It appears that Jalaluddin's first wife had died rather young and he afterwards married another lady by the name of Kira Khatun of Qoniya, perhaps of Christian origin, who outlived him and by whom he had two other children, a son and a daughter.

In 1228, because of the insistent invitation of Alauddin Kai-Qobad, ruler of Anatoliya, also known as Rum, Bahauddin came and finally settled in Qoniya where he took up an honorable appointment of a preacher and a teacher. On the death of his father in 1231, Jalaluddin Rumi, aged twentyfive, inherited his position as the Islamic Maulavi. One of Bahauddin's students, Sayed Burhanuddin Muhaqqiq Tarmizi, also known as ***Sirr-dan*** (Secret-knower), continued to train Rumi in ***Shariah*** and ***Tariqa,*** especially that of Rumi's father. For nine years Rumi practiced Sufism as a disciple of Burhanuddin until the latter's death in 1240. During part of these years of Sufi discipleship, Sayed directed Rumi to go to Syria and master the traditional Islamic domains of knowledge. He first went to Aleppo and studied at the *Madrassa-i-Halawiyya*. After completing his studies he returned to Qoniya where he was asked to observe several forty-day spiritual retreats (*Chilla*), in pursuance of Sufi practices.

Rumi's public life then began from 1240: he became an Islamic jurist, issuing ***fatwas***, and giving sermons in the mosque at Qoniya. He also served as Maulavi in the ***madrassa***. During this period Rumi also travelled to Damascus. On his return from Damascus, Jalaluddin's reputation for learning and sanctity became very great and he became a leading theologian in Qoniya.

It was his meeting with the wandering mendicant Shamsuddin Tabrizi in 1244 that completely changed his life.

His meeting with Shams Tabrizi is so engrossed in legends woven round this man of supernatural powers, that it is very difficult to find out the truth. But certain it is that Jalaluddin became very devoted to him.

There are a few anecdotes related to him which will show Jalaluddin's high regard for, great faith in, his friend and master which will also indicate how instructions were given to his friend and disciple by ShamsuddinTabrizi. It is said that one day, as a trial test, he requested Jalaluddin to make him a present of a slave. Jalaluddin instantly brought forward before him his wife Kira

Khatun to serve him. To this act of renunciation, Shams Tabrizi replied, "Rather I want a youth to wait upon me." This time Jalaluddin brought his son, Sultan Walad, to serve the purpose. He then wanted from Jalaluddin some wine, which, he said, he was accustomed to drink. Jalaluddin himself prepared the cup of wine and presented the same before him. The spiritual guide appeared satisfied at Jalaluddin's behaviour and declared that he was really the greatest of men that he had ever met.

There is another anecdote which illustrates how Shams Tabrizi used to instruct his disciple. Jalaluddin is reported to have said, "When Shamsuddin first came and I felt a mighty spark of love for him burning within my heart, he took upon himself to command me in the most despotic and peremptory manner : "Study", he said, "the writings of thy father." For a while I studied nothing else. Then he said : "Keep silent and speak to no one." I ceased from all intercourse with my fellows. He came to me another day as I was by his command studying the writings of my father. Thrice he called out to me : "Study them not." I laid down the book and never since have I opened it." But one night Jalaluddin dreamt that he was in company with a number of friends who were all studying and discussing with him those very writings of his father. As he awoke from his dream, Shams Tabrizi was entering the room with a servere look. Addressing Jalaluddin protested that since his prohibitions he had never once opened his father's works. "Yes", retorted Shams Tabrizi, "there is a study of reading, and there is also a study by contemplating. Dreams are but the shadows of our working thoughts. Hast thou not occupied thy thoughts with those writings, thou would not have dreamt about them."

Jalaluddin, who was well-versed with all knowledge, was unaware of the magical powers of Love and Devotion; but by coming in contact with Shams Tabrizi, he was so over-powered with magic that he lost all world consciousness and became one with the Infinite.

According to R.A. Nicholson, Jalaluddin found in Shams Tabrizi that perfect image of the Divine Beloved which he had long been seeking. For almost two years they remained inseparable. The effect of this association on Jalaluddin had been that of a catalyst that transformed him. Their close relationship was greatly resented by the Maulavi, or Turkish Mevlevi, disciples of Jalaluddin Rumi who assailed the intruder with abuse and threats of violence.

From an accomplished teacher and jurist, Rumi was transformed into an ascetic. Shams had travelled throughout the Middle East looking out for someone who could "endure my company" and found in Jalaluddin Rumi that person. According to R.A. Nicholson, Jalaluddin Rumi found in Shams Tabrizi that perfect image of the Divine Beloved.(5) For a number of years both of them remained inseparable. Their close relationship was greatly resented by Rumi's disciples. In 1248, Rumi and Shams were talking, Shams was called to the back door. He went out never to be seen again. Rumi's love for, and his separation from him, found expression in outpouring of lyrics which are included in ***Diwan-i-Shams-i-Tabrizi***. He himself went out searching for Shams and not finding him realized :

Why should I seek? I am the same as
He. His essence speaks through me.
I have been looking for myself.(6)

According to William C. Chittick "Separation from Shams was but the appearance; separation from the Divine Beloved was the reality."(7) When Shams disappeared permanently, Rumi became more profoundly creative than ever before as a mystical poet.

After Shams Tabrizi, Rumi found another companion in SalahuddinFaridun ***Zar-kub***, a goldsmith. On the death of Salahuddin in 1261, Rumi's scribe and favourite student, Husamuddin Hasan, assumed the role of Rumi's companion. For years these two spiritual friends worked together as Superior and Assistant. It was Husam to whom the famous ***Mesnavi***, written by Jalaluddin Rumi, was dedicated and it was his encouragement and suggestion which greatly inspired Rumi to write the great poem, which is also known as ***Hussam-nameh***. After completion of six volumes of the ***Mesnavi*** Rumi retired from this world leaving Hussam as his successor in the Order of Derveshes. On 17th December, 1273, Rumi passed away and his body was buried beside that of his father in Qoniya and a splendid shrine was built with Blue Dome known as ***Qubba-i-Khazra*** which has now become a place of pilgrimage for the devotees of the Maulana.

Hussam was styled *Chalabi*, as he became the headman of the Order after Jalaluddin Rumi. Hussam died ten years after the death of his master and friend and then Jalaluddin Rumi's son, Bahauddin Sultan Walad, succeeded Hussam and passed away in

1312 A.D. Walad's son, Chalabi Amir Arif, succeeded him and died in 1320 A.D. The control of Order remained in the family of Maulana Rumi.

Rumi was a true Sufi : he had many spiritual visions and was transported into ecstasy. He was endowed with a very rare combination of high spirituality and rich poetic genius in Persian. He was particularly fascinated by the idea of rotation. All natural phenomena, in fact, came within the gamut of his imagery. In his lyrics, as well as in his quatrains, he draws images of exceptional beauty out of his own spiritual consciousness, establishing an irrefutable claim to be the greatest mystical poet of Islam. The age of Rumi, it can be said, represents the zenith of Sufi achievement, both theoretically and artistically.

Rumi's doctrine advocates tolerance, positive reasoning, goodness, charity and awareness through love. To him all religions were truth. His peaceful teachings have appealed to people of all sects and creeds. He is hailed as the greatest mystical poet of Islam.

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2. Ritter, H. Bausani, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Edited by: P. Bearman.
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and facts about Maulana Rumi.

4. Ahmed, Nazeer, *Islam in Global History: From the Death of Prophet Muhammed to the First World War*, 2000, p.58, ISBN 978-0-7388-5962-0.
5. *Rumi: Poet and Mystic* by Reynold A. Nicholson.
6. *The Essential Rumi* translations by Coleman Brooks, pp.XX
7. The quotation is taken from *Sufism –A short Introduction*, by W.C. Chittick.

NOTES:

The Life sketch of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi is culled mainly from the following:

1. *Manaqib al-Arifin* by Shamsuddin Ahmed Aflaki.
2. *Rumi: Poet and Mystic* by Reynold A. Nicholson.
3. *Discourses of Rumi* by A. J. Arberry (19961).
4. *Rumi – His Life and Genius*, an article by H.C. Paul published in *Indo-Iranica*, Journal of Iran Society, Kolkata, Vol. 1 No. 3.
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CHAPTER - II

MESNAVI OF RUMI

CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

Great work of Jalaluddin Rumi in Persian is known as *Mesnavi-i-Ma'navi*, or Spiritual Couplets, also called the '*Hussamnama*. 'the Book of Hussam', composed of twentysix thousand and six hundred verses and is divided into six books. It is an epic literature and has been acclaimed as the complete scripture of Sufism and is hailed by the Persian poet Jami (1414 – 1492 A.D.) as-

Mesnavi – i –Maulavi – i -Ma'navi
Hast Quran dar Zaban-i-Pahlavi.
(The profound 'Mesnavi' of Maulavi Rumi
Is the Quran composed in the language of Iran).

Even Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1838 A.D.), a famous poet of Urdu and Persian, has said about Maulana Rumi –

Ke u baharfe Pahalvi, Quran Nawisht.(1)
(He wrote the Quran in the Persian tongue.)

Rumi has summed up in his monumental *Mesnavi* in Persian all that had been said or written on Sufism in Arabic before him, and he is also said to have extracted the essence of the Holy Quran and presented in his work. He was fond of allegorical interpretations of Quranic verses and has shown in his work that Sufism is not inconsistent with the Quran. Describing the purpose of his work the famous *Mesnavi*, Maulana Rumi says, -

Man ze Quran maghz ra bardashtam
Ustukhan ra bar saganandakhtam.(2)
(The marrow from the Quran have I drawn
And the dry bones unto the dogs have I cast.)

Rumi declared that the world has not read properly into the message of love as given by the Holy Quran and the religious bigots have stigmatized it by wrong interpretation. He inspires all religious-minded people to turn inwards and introspect rather than to search outward for the realization.

Rumi, in his *Mesnavi*, professes to expound the inmost sense of the prophetic revelation; his expressions are pregnant with significance; his thoughts are profound and subtle. His words are simple but the ideas are sometimes so inscrutable as to be hard to comprehend without the help of a commentary. "His expressions are concise and oracular and his style abstruse by excess of cogitation or intuitional insight."(3)

The verses of the *Mesnavi* are like aphorisms for the explanations of which too large a space is required of which Rumi was well aware when he said :

Gar barezi behr ra dar kuza-i
Chand gunjad qismat-i-yak roza-i
Gar bigoyam sharah een be-had shuwad
Mesnavi haftad man kagaz shuwad.

(How can you confine an ocean in a pot ?
How can it be possible to achieve this in a day?
If I try to explain my *Mesnavi*, it will go beyond limit;
It shall require seventy maunds of paper.)

He, therefore, paid hardly any attention to the form but concentrated on the dissemination of his message with which he was most concerned.

Any one looking through the *Mesnavi*, at random, can also see that its doctrines, interwoven with apologues, anecdotes, fables, legends, and traditions, range over the whole domain of medieval religious life and thought. In his odes, Rumi writes from the stand-point of the mystic who sees nothing but God, but his *Mesnavi* presents him as an eloquent and enthusiastic teacher explaining the way to God for the benefit of those who have entered upon it.

The *Mesnavi*, in actuality, is the expression of peaceful devotions and profound philosophy in sublime poetry. It is a wonderful encyclopaedia of Sufistic tales and discourses. In many a place, Rumi tries to simplify the poem with the help of fables and illustrations for easy comprehension.

The material which makes up the *Mesnavi* is divisible into two different though by no means distinct categories :

i) Theoretical discussions of the principal themes of Sufi mystical life and doctrine, and

ii) Stories or fables intended to illustrate those themes as they arise.

There are continuous anecdotes and parables by narrating which Rumi gives them allegorical significance having religious and spiritual bearing by which lofty truths of mysticism are explained and knotty problems of life solved.

Rumi was especially indebted, as he freely acknowledges in the course of his poem, to two earlier Persian mystic poets : Sanai of Ghazna and Fariduddin Attar of Nishapur.

Rumi derived his material, first and foremost, from the Holy Quran and likewise, the Traditions, anecodotes from the life of the Prophet, teachings and preachings of Sufi masters, such as, Ibn al-Mubarak (d.797 A.D.) al-Muhasibi (d. 837 A.D.) and al-Kharraz (d.899 A.D.) and subsequently from the biographies and the writings of Abu-Talib al-Makki (d.996 A.D.), al-Kalabadhi (d.1000 A.D.) al-Sarraj (d.988 A.D. al-Qushairi (d.1071 A.D.) and Hujwiri (d. 1072 A.D.) leading up to the great Muhammad al-Ghazali (d. 1111 A.D.) and the philosophical renderings of Ibn al-Arabi (d. 1240 A.D). In the field of statecraft the '*Mirrors of Princes*' tradition, taken from the Sassanian writings of pre-Islamic Iran, was early on supplemented by Indian animal fables of '*Panchatantra*', translated into Arabic from Pahlavi, itself a version from the original Sanskrit, under the title of *Kalilah wa Damnah* by Ibn al-Muqaffa (d.757 A.D.). These are but a few of the very many sources on which Jalaluddin Rumi drew for his illustrative stories.

Most of the interpreters and scholars expound the *Mesnavi* in terms of the pantheistic system associated with

Ibn al-Arabi as the poem was deeply influenced from that quarter. It is held that the poem cannot be made intelligible without reference to those ideas. This has resulted, according to other interpreters, from obscurity of a doctrine expounded by Jalaluddin Rumi. They hold that he is basically a poet and mystic, not a philosopher and logician. R.A. Nicholson, who devoted many years to meticulous study and fastidious interpretation, says, "The poem resembles a trackless ocean. There are no boundaries, no lines of demarcation between the literal 'husk' and the 'kernel' of doctrine in which its inner course is conveyed and copiously expounded."(4) The *Mesnavi* was written down sporadically over a long period of time without any firm frame-work to keep the discourse on orderly lines; however, a deep study reveals a pattern of sort which can be seen to knit together the seemingly random topics.

One can also draw an inference that the poetry of Jalaluddin Rumi, particularly his lyric poetry, is the consummate expression either of some supreme moment in his life or of some rapturous mood, and it recalls to his readers similar experiences in their own lives. All great lyric poetry is, essentially, subjective in nature, and it must incorporate the vivid expression of personal experience. Jalaluddin Rumi describes his own experiences with the joy of his lofty imagination in his own vision. He sings essentially of life.

This gives to his poetry the essential unity of theme.

He weaves into his poetry thrills of desire and those spurts of emotion which fire with passion our simple experiences of life. It is all done with such vivid and moving imagery that it cannot fail to strike an understanding and sympathetic response. His greatness lies in his philosophy of life. By advocating a life of ceaseless activity, and discountenancing all those views of life which advocate renunciation, as mystics in general were wont to do, he widened the scope of his lyric poetry. Real life is nothing but a progressive succession of fresh purposes, fresh ideas and values. His philosophy of life envisages a glorious destiny for mankind. He glimpses the destiny, and expresses his joy in the vision in rich harmonious language. It has often been said that the joy of imagination in its own vision is one of the most exquisite moods man ever experiences. He sings for communion with the Lord because he cannot help singing; his heart is full with the longing and cannot otherwise be relieved.

There are critics who maintain that a long poem is really a contradiction in terms. Poetry is essentially, according to them, the language and expression of excitement, and as excitement is always of brief duration there cannot be, or could not be, such thing as a long poem. While there appears to be some force in this argument, it must be understood that this criticism of long poems, to a certain extent, is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of poetry. The universal appeal of short poems, especially lyrics, cannot be denied, but at the same time, it must be admitted that long poems, by giving the poet an opportunity for sustained effort, provide a true test of his art and depth of his thought. It has been seen that even the greatest poets find it difficult to keep up the glow and train of thought for any length of time, only the super artists are capable of avoiding a break and dullness. The true measure of greatness of any poet is provided not only by the grace and continuity of his lofty flight of imagination, but by his power of constantly sustaining it. While it would not be correct to suggest that the excellence of a poem depends upon its length, it can safely be said that a successful long poem can only be composed by a God-gifted great poet. Since that long poem of Rumi is set in a wider context of thought, feeling and lofty imaginative flight and contains a wealth of thought and artistic beauty is a sufficient proof of his being a great exponent of his poetic art and mysticism which has made his *Mesnavi* a classic for all times.

Different scholars and critics have given their observations on the *Mesnavi* of Maulana Rumi --------- some are highly laudable, some are highly critical --- yet all of them concur that *Mesnavi* of Maulana Rumi stands out unique amongst many 'inspired books' of Sufism and none has been so carefully studied and copiously expounded in a number of the principal languages of the Islamic world and of Europe. In the *Mesnavi*, Maulana Rumi is a mystic first and a poet afterwards, that is, he values his poetic gift as a means of spreading his theosophical ideas and spiritual experiences.

Appreciating the poetry of Rumi another discerning critic has said : "The real basis of his poetry is a loftily inculcated ethical system, which recognizes in purity of heart, charity, self-renunciation and bridling of the passion, the necessary conditions of eternal happiness. Attached to this we find a pantheistic theory of emanation of all things from God, and their uultimate reunion with him ---- Frequently the thought flashes out, all religions and relationship are only the rays of a single eternal Sun; that all prophets have only delivered and proclaimed in different tongues the same principles of eternal goodness and eternal truth which flow from the divine soul of World."(5)

It is to R.A. Nicholson, unquestionably, lies the foremost credit of opening up to English readers the vast wealth of poetic genius and philosophic thoughts of Maulana Rumi. It look Nicholson twenty long years to translate Rumi's *Mesnavi* into English. Commenting on Rumi's *Mesnavi*, he says, "With all its faults and from a modern point of view there are many – the *Mesnavi* exhibits, more fully than *Diwan-i-Shams-i-Tabriz*, the marvelous range of Jalaluddin's poetical genius. His Odes reach the utmost heights of which a poetry inspired by vision and rapture is capable, and these alone would have made him the unchallenged laureate of mysticism. But they move in a world remote from ordinary experience, open to none but the 'unveiled', whereas the *Mesnavi* is chiefly concerned with problems and speculations bearing on the conduct, use, and meaning of life. While the Odes depict Reality as reflected in the clairvoyant consciousness of the saint, the *Mesnavi* represents the Saint not only as a mirror of Reality, but also a personage invested with Divine authority and power, an indispensable Guide on the way to God, a Physician who can diagnose and cure diseases of the soul, a Preacher of the Truth and a Teacher of the law – the law of reverant obedience, through which "Heaven was filled with light and the Angels became pure and holy".(6)

In the same light while comparing his two books Nicholson says in another place, "We have seen that the Sufistic theosophy is the fountainhead of Jalal's inspiration. From this the *Mesnavi* and the *Diwan* descend by separate channels. The one is a majestic river, calm and deep, meandering through many a rich and varied landscape to the immeasurable ocean; the other a foaming torrent leaps and plunges in the ethereal solitude."

"This great poem", referring to the *Mesnavi,* says Gibb, "is one of the greatest and most noble in all Persian literature, which in clear, simple language, but without apparent order or method, discourses on the doctrine and aspects of the mystic philosophy, and has for ages formed the text book of the Sufi thinkers from the shores of the Mediterranean to the Wall of China. Scarcely less important has been the influence of the impassioned *Diwan* wherein inspired strains the poet-saint sings of the mystic love and immortalizes his dear master, Shamsuddin of Tabriz."(7)

Even Rumi himself says of his *Mesnavi* in the preface of its first volume : "This is the Book of the *Mesnavi*, which is the root of the Religion in respect of its unveiling the mysteries of attainment (to the Truth) and of certainty; and which is the greatest science of God and the clearest way of God and the most manifest evidence of God….. Therein the righteous eat and drink, and thereby the free are gladdened and rejoiced; and like the Nile of Egypt, it is a drink to them that endure patiently, but a grief to the people of Pharoah and the unbelievers. It is the cure for sick breasts, and the purge of sorrows, and the expounder of the Quran and the (source of) abundance of Divine gifts and the means of cleansing sordid dispositions." He further says: "I have exerted myself to give length to the Poem in rhymed couplets, which comprises strange tales and rare sayings and excellent discourses and precious indications, and the path of the ascetics and the garden of the devotees – brief in expression, but manifold in meaning".

Again in the words of Nicholson : "The *Mesnavi* is a grand story book. Following, or, rather adapting to his own needs, a method long established in Sufi poetry, Jalaluddin sets the matter of his discourse within a frame-work of tales, which introduce and exemplify the various topics, and are frequently interwoven with explanations of their inner meaning." There are several hundreds of stories, and they consist of legends from the Quran and its commentaries, the

Traditions of the Prophets and the lives of pre-Muhammadan prophets and Muslim saints. The *Kalilah and Damnah*, the Perso-Arabic adaptation of the Sanskrit *Panchatantra*, also supplies numerous beastfables, where the animals play the allegorical parts assigned to them. But Jalaluddin owes little, though he borrows much".

"They (the tales) abound in lively dialogue, masterly satiric and humorous descriptions of human nature, pictures of life and manners illustrating the outlook not only of medieval Sufism but of Muslims generally, and lessons of universal application drawn from a wisdom that never plays on the surface without contemplating the hidden depths below. Great poet as he is, Jalaluddin loves Truth more than Art. In his Odes the tide of enthusiasm sweeps all moralities before it : in the *Mesnavi* he rubs them in with a persistence which renders selection and abridgment necessary."**(8)**

Another critic, Prof. Cowell, in his "Oxford Essays", says about Rumi's *Mesnavi*, "The stories themselves are generally easy and are told in a delightful style; but the disquisitions which interrupt them are often "darker than the darkest oracles" and unintelligible even to the Persians themselves without a copious commentary. When he is clear, no Persian poet can surpass his depth of thought or beauty of imagery; the flow of fine things runs on unceasingly as from a river-god's urn".**(9)**

However, A.J. Arberry says, "The *Mesnavi*, which contains many passages of poetry of the highest order of excellence, is a notoriously difficult work to read and understand; not only, or even not so much on account of the intricacy and unfamiliarity of the doctrines therein enunciated, but still more because of the casual looseness, nor to say anarchy, of its construction. Anecdotes of prophets and saints and legends of all sorts and conditions of men and women are well-nigh inextricably intertwined with long didactic passages abounding in learned and otherwise obscure allusion."(10)

From all this one can deduce that the *Mesnavi* represents the impromptu outpourings of a mind overwhelmed in mystical thought, the multifarious and often arrestingly beautiful images welling up unceasingly out of the poet's overflowing unconscious and call for proper commentary interpreting those images.

Khalifa Abdul Hakim, in *Metaphysics of Rumi*, expresses that Maulana Rumi is very difficult for an ordinary reader to understand as his high thoughts have been so much veiled by his mystic and un-systematic way of exposition. He wants to show the ways of God to man and the path of self-realization. But it is difficult for one to get the truth buried in obscurity because the *Mesnavi* of Rumi is an unsystematic collection of all philosophical, theological and mystical thoughts developed in Islam from its beginning down to the thirteenth century A.D. At first sight Maulana Rumi appears to be an eclectic but a deeper study and understanding will reveal his outlook on life which shows "that there is a method in his madness, which is in many ways more consistent and methodical than other systems of scholastic and intellectual metaphysics".(11)

Rumi's thoughts had been the product of many foreign ideas even though he contended that he had derived his inspiration from the Quran and Hadis only. It has therefore been summed up that in the *Mesnavi* "one finds the broken light of Semitic monotheism, Greek intellectualism with Pythagorean elements and eclectic theories of being and becoming. Plato's theory of ideas and Aristole's theory of *causation* and development, the One of Plotinus and the ecstasy that unites with the One, the controversial questions of the Mutakallimum, the epistemological problems of Ibn-Sina and Al-Farabi, Ghazali's theory of prophetic consciousness and Ibnul Arabi's Monism."(12)

According to R.A. Nicholson, in *Rumi: Poet And Mystic*, "Rumi wrote in the ecstatic mood and therefore his work is analogous to what is called "automatic writing". That is why such poetry can communicate to us the same rapture as it did to the writer himself, especially when accompanied by music, as is customary among Sufis engaged in "Zikr".(13) The author is himself, at that point of time, at the mercy of his ecstatic inspiration and is himself unable to explain the meaning of his verse."

In a critical analysis of Rumi's *Mesnavi*, it can be said, while the language of love and wine is common to all the Persian mystical poets, Maulana Rumi stands out supreme in this convention and technique for inventiveness of imagery and fertility of allusion. He superimposes upon the general foundation of Sufi metaphor several new ranges of comparison. Yet, in stylistic perfection, he may not boast of the sparkle of the wine of Hafiz, or the salt of Sa'di's robust commonsense and humour, or the fire of Firdousi's ardour, he has merits enough to do justice to his own lofty subject of mysticism.

The vast poem of Maulana Rumi, in short, expresses the spirit of Persian mysticism with a power and insight that have never been equalled. Dynamic elements in the *Mesnavi* have influenced many later poets of Iran and other countries, such as Iqbal (1873-1938 A.D.) of India – in the concept of love, ideal man, immortality and free will.

Persian poet Jami (1414-1492 A.D.) has paid the following rare tribute to Maulana Rumi –

"*Man che goyam wasf-i-an alijanab?*
Nee st paighambar wali darad kitab."

(How can I describe the qualities of this great master ? He is not a prophet, yet he possesses the Book (of divine revelations).

In fine, I would say the *Mesnavi* of Maulana Rumi occupies the topmost summit in the mountainrange of Sufistic poetry in Persian and is the foremost representative of didactic poetry in all of Persian literature.

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2. Ibid., p.75.
3. Davar, F.C., *Iran And Its Culture*, (1953), p.311.
4. Introduction to the Eight Volume translation of the *Mesnavi*. Also quoted by A. J. Arberry in his translation.
5. A. von Kremer, quoted, by R. A. Nicholson in his Selections from the *Diwan-i-Shams-i-Tabriz,* p. XXVI.
6. Nicholson, R.A., *Tales of Mystic Meaning*, p. XIX. (Bold letters in the quotation are by the author).
7. Gibb, E.J.W., *History of Ottoman Poetry*, Vol. I, p.146.
8. Nicholson, R.A., *Tales of Mystic Meaning*, p. XXV.
9. Quoted by Claud Field in *Persian Literature*, p. 180.
10. Arberry, A.J., *Discourses of Rumi,* (1961), p.8.
11. Quoted by Syedur Rehman in *An Introduction to Islamic Philosophy*, (1956), p.319.
12. Syedur Rehman, *op.cit.*, p. 318.
13. *Zikr* means remembrance; having God constantly in mind and heart. This practice is employed by the Sufis to get rid of the evil dispositions and vile qualities of the flesh so that heart may be cleared of all but God; and means of clearing it is *Zikr Allah.*

CHAPTER - III

DIWAN-I-SHAMS-I-TABRIZI AND OTHER WRITINGS

Jalaluddin Rumi is also the author of *Diwan-i-Shams-i-Tabriz*, also known as *Diwan-i-Kabir* (The Great Diwan) which is considered as Rumi's masterpieces and is dedicated to his spiritual preceptor, Shams Tabrizi. It is written in Persian language and scholars consider it as one of the greatest works of Persian literature.

In the Diwan we find the best specimen of Sufic lyrics replete with truths of spirituality expressed in simple but forceful language. The lyrics number about two thousand five hundred and relate the cardinal philosophy of Sufism and are scalable only by the highly developed and disciplined Sufis. There is a divine rapture running through the lyrics and those who are well-versed in Sufism can derive ecstasy from them (1)

The Diwan contains poems in several different styles of poetry such as odes, eulogies, quatrains, etc. Although most of the poems in the Diwan are in Persian, there are also some in Arabic, and a small number of mixed Persian/Greek and Persian/Turkish poems, according to Foruzanfar.(2)

In the *Diwan*, Jalaluddin's lyric poetry in Persian is the consummate expression either of some supreme moment in his life, or of some rapturous mood, and it recalls to his readers similar experiences in their own lives. Rumi sings essentially of life. This gives to his poetry the essential unity of theme. By advocating a life of ceaseless activity, and discountenancing all those views of life which advocate renunciation, as mystics in general were wont to do, he widened the scope of his lyric poetry. His philosophy of life envisages glorious destiny for mankind. Many a Sufi-poet has derived inspiration from these verses and achieved salvation by transcending all barriers which impede his progress to realization.

Scholars hail *Diwan-e Shams* as a masterpiece of wisdom and eloquence and that Rumi attained heights that were attained by only a few before his time or since. In the *Diwan* Rumi has used many images from the mundane world such as the wine and the wine-bearer, the pearl and the ocean, the sun and the moon, the night and day. etc., but he has always expressed spiritual wisdom of the highest order through this imagery.

The mastery of rhyme and rhythm in the Diwan is such that Rumi often creates a new vocabulary, using the same old words and expressions and yet creating new feelings that are associated with them. While reading the Diwan the reader acquires the experience of artistic beauty, musical genius, rhythm and ecstatic energy all in conjunction with the mental understanding of wisdom conveyed is simply superb. The spiritually inclined are immediately transported to another world – world of wisdom and ecstasy.

MAJALES-I-SABA

These are seven Persian sermons, as the name suggests, or lectures given in seven different assemblies. These sermons give a commentary on the deeper meaning of Quran and Hadis. The sermons also contain quotations from Sanai, Attar, and other poets, including Rumi himself. According to Aflaki, Rumi delivered these sermons on the request of notables, especially Salahuddin Faridun Zar-kub. These sermons show Rumi's knowledge in the Islamic sciences. His style is the typical of the genre of lectures given by Sufis and other spiritual teachers.

MAKATIB:

These are Rumi's letters in Persian addressed to his disciples, family members, and men of state and influence. The style of the letters is highly sophisticated and epistolary, which is in conformity with the expectations of correspondence directed to nobles, statesmen and kings. (3)

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1) Farauzanfar, Badi-uz-Zaman, *Kulliyat-e Shams*, 8 Vol,
2) Ibid.
3) Franklin Lewis, *Rumi Past and Present, East and West: The Life, Teaching and Poetry of Jalaluddin Rumi*, Overworld Publication Ltd., 2008, p.295

CHAPTER - IV

TEACHINGS OF RUMI

The Mesnavi of Maulana Rumi shows him an eloquent and enthusiastic teacher explaining the way to God for the benefit of those who seek union with the Ultimate Reality. A detailed study of his Mesnavi is necessary because he left no problem of philosophy or religion untouched. Since his thoughts have not been developed in a systematic way but are lying scattered, it has made this task all the more difficult. It is a huge task to discuss all the problems dealt by him. However, an attempt has been made to define in brevity his teachings about some of the main themes discussed by him in the Mesnavi in respect of God, Emanation from One Being, Nature of the Soul, Tauhid, Love, Mysticism, Annihilation of the Self, Perfect Man, Good and Evil, Action, Service to Mankind, Negation of Rituals, Guide or Murshid. These are enumerated here.

GOD

God cannot be known by the senses, for He is immaterial; nor can He be known by the intellect, for He is unthinkable. Human understanding with its finite categories of knowledge cannot go beyond the range of the finite. However much Rumi tried to explain and describe God, he had at last become bound to admit that God cannot be conceived - "It is the One conception and unity of God; and He is indescribable." He says -

Gar tawahhum mì-kund ú ishq-i-zát;
Zát na-búd wahm-i-asmá wa safát:
Wahm záyida za-ausáf wa hadd ast
Haqq na-záyida-st ú - "lam yulad"ast.(1)

(If he conceives that he is in love with the Essence of God,
Conception of divine names and attributes is not the
Essence,Conception is begotten of qualities and
definition;God is not begotten. He is "Lam yulad".)

According to Rumi, the knowledge of God can only be attained by illumination, revelation and inspiration. To know God one should know his own self—

Gauhar juz khud shanási níst dar beharè wajúd
Má bá hard khwesh mi gardam chun gardab ha:
(Self-knowledge is the only pearl in the sea of life;
Like whirlpools round ourself, we whirl in incessant strife.)

"Look into your heart," he affirms, "for the kingdom of God is within you."He who knows himself, knows God. The heart is like a mirror in which every divine quality is reflected.

Thus God of Maulana Rumi, thought transcendental - not conceivable to human conceptions, is yet immanent in everything in the universe. That **Inconceivable One** is the **Absolute One** of Plotinus. Rumi has no special term to denote the highest hypostasis. His favourite metaphors, referring to the Absolute Being, are the Sea, Light, Love, Wine, Beauty and Truth. As we find in the follo'wing lines of Rumi where the absolute Unity is identified -with the Sea :

Munbasit bùdim, wa yak jauhar hamà:
Bì-sar wa bì-pa bùdìm, àn sar hama.
Yak gauhar bùdim hamchùm Àftàb,
Bì girah búdim, wa sàfi hamchun àb.(2)
(Spread, we were and ald al one substance,
And all of us were without any heand foot.
We were one in essence like the Sun,
We were without any form and pure like water.)

To Maulana Rumi God is Pure Being and Absolute Beauty. He is everywhere and in everything. According to him, "Everything of this world is perishable and the only eternal being is God. He is the **First (Awwat)** and the **Last (Akher)** - the **Apparent (Zahir)** and the **Real (Batin)** and He knows everything." Therefore, every man must seek knowledge and the light of the Supreme Being in this world. To know God, he says -

Chashm band, gosh band, lab bà-band;
Gar na bì nì Noor-i-Haqq, bar man bà-khand.
(Shut your eyes, close your ears, seal your lips (for concentration)
If still you do not see Light of Truth, then you can laugh at me)

This world Rumi regards as a place for soul-making where one prepares himself for initiation into the higher mode of existence in the next world.

Everything of this world is a non-entity in essence: God alone is eternal and the true existence. In the Holy Quran God says - "I was a hidden treasure and I desired to be known and so I created the world and all that is in it to know myself."

Rumi also believes that God is the only Being and that He is the only real source of all other beings. Since God is the only Being, the others beings are mere appearances; and He is the single source of all the increasing activity.

EMANATION FROM ONE BEING

Rumi considers the whole universe as emanating from one God. His pantheistic attitude declares that all that exists is God. Our soul is but a ray of His Light, which has been severed from its real source and fallen into the engrossment of this base and physical world and is continuously striving to regain its fountain-head and for this passionate yearning to see the Divine Beloved, the soul desires to tear off the intervening curtain of the physical body so that it once again becomes one with its source.

The key-note of Rumi's Mesnavi is struck in the opening lines which represent the soul separated from God and is well defined as "an attempt to purify the religious sentiment by love"—

Hearken to this Reed forlorn
Breathing, ever since 'twas torn
From its rushy bed, a strain
Of impassioned love and pain.

The secret of my song, though near.
None can see and none can hear.
Oh, for a friend to know the sign
And mingle all his soul with mine!

Tis the flame of Love that fired me'
Tis the wine of Love inspired me.
Wouldst thou learn how lovers bleed.
Hearken, hearken to the Reed!'(3)

How the reed-pipe complains of its banishment from its home : "Ever since they tore me from my osier bed, my plaintive notes have moved men and women to tears". The pipe here refers to the conscience of the individual soul who is always hankering after the love of God. It laments : "Body is not veiled from soul neither soul from body, yet no man has ever seen a soul." This lamentation of the pipe is fire, not mere air, and he who lacks this fire, should be counted as dead. It is the fire of love that inspires the pipe. What is this love? It is the strong attraction that draws all creatures back to re-union with their Creator.

The moral purpose inspired by the Mesnavi is in the description of emanation of the One Being through every grade of existence. This process is epitomized in the evolution of the soul which descends to the material world, passes through the mineral, vegetive and animal kingdoms, attains to rationality in man, suffers probation, undergoes retribution, ascends to the sphere of the angels and continuing its spiritual development till it is reunited with the Infinite One, of which it is the mirror, realizes that all its experience of separation was such stuff as dreams are made on.

The well-known following lines of Rumi may be regarded as explicit comment on these texts, fixing the right interpretation :

Ham cho sabzà bàrahà royìdah am,
Haft sad haftàd qàlib didah am;
Az jamàdi murdam o nàmì shudam;
Maz numà murdam ba haiwàn sar zadam;
Murdam az haiwàni o adam shudam;
Pas che tarsam kai ze murdan gum shudam?
Hamlaè dìgar bi-mìram az bashar,
Tà bar àram az malàyak bàl o par;
Az malak ham bàyadam justan ze jú,
Kulle shayì n halikun ilia Wujh-Ù.
Pas a'dam gardam a'dam chun arghanOn
Goyad am Tnna ilaiha rajeun'.
Bàre dìgar az malak parràn shawam.
Àn che andar wahm n-àyad àn shawam.'(4)

(Like grass have I grown o'er and o'er again;
Seven hundred seventy bodies have I seen.
From out the form of mineral I passed.
And as a vegetable lived again;
From out the vegetable form I died
And lifted up a head as animal;
The form of animal I put away

And took the human shape of Adam-Eve;
Why shall I fear that if I die once more
I shall be lost? Nay, I shall surely gain,
At the next onset, dying out of man'
The flowing locks and shining wings of angels.
And finally, when next I take my flight
From e'en that world, I surely shall become
That which beyond all comprehension rests;
For all things pass except the Primal Cause,
The Cause of Causes, the Face of the Self,
Which is Non-being of Aught-Else than Self,
(For Self is the Negation of Not-Self).
And when I am in such Non-Being, then
My Being in Non-Being shall resound
In organ-tones, Thou hast returned to Me'.)

Elsewhere, in the same Mesnavi, Rumi repeats :

Àmadah awwal bà iqlì me jamàd;
Waz jamàdi dar nabàti oftàd;
Sàlahà andar nabàti umr kard,
Waz jamàdi yàd n-àward az na burd;
Waz nabàti chun ba haiwàni futàd;
N-àmad-ash hàl-e nabàti hech yàd;
Ham Chun-ìn iqlim ta iqlìm raft,
Tà shud àknun aqil-o dana wa zaft;
Aqlahàe awwalin-ash yàd n-ìst,

Ham azin a'ql-ash tahawwaì kardani-st,
Tà riyad z-ìn a'ql pur-hirs o talab,
Sad hazàràn a'ql bì nad bu-l-'ajab.
Gar-chè khufta gasht o shud nàsi ze pesh
Kai guzàrand-ash dar-an nisiyàn-e-khwesh.
Baz az àn khwab ash ba bedari kashand,
Tà kunad bar hàlate khud rìsh-khand.(5)

(First into state of mineral he came;
And then, as vegetable, ages spent,
Foregetting all he felt as mineral;
Then into state of animal he passed,
Oblivious of the vegetable state;
Ascending thus, stage after stage, he now
Is man, intelligent, knowing and strong.
Yet all foregetful of his previous states.
From this stage of intelligence also
He has to rise, since it is full of greeds
And clingings to small things and jealousies.
When he has done so, then a myriad paths
Of knowledge, wonder, and great mysteries
Will open out before him endlessly.
He will not be allowed to lose him-Self;
He will be dragged out of his Night of Sleep,
Into the Day of Wakefulness again.
Till he laughs at him-self in ecstasy.)

The same succession of mineral, vegetable, animal, human and higher kingdoms of nature is to be found in the ancient Sanskrit books, other scriptures and also in modem scientific research.

According to Rumi, "Originally, you were clay. From being mineral you became vegetable. From vegetable, you became animal, and from animal, man. During these periods man did not know where he was going, but he was being taken on a long journey nonetheless. And you have to go through a hundred different worlds yet."(7)

Rumi, in fact, in this interpretation, epitomises the entire history of the phenomenal world, as viewed by the mystic - the progress of man out of God, into the universe and back again to God - by his supreme artistic expressions of mysticism in Islam.

NATURE OF THE SOUL

Rumi's thoughts had been the product of many foreign ideas even though he contended that he had derived his inspiration from the Quran and the Hadis Sharif only.

He believes in the survival and continuity of the soul after physical death. He also believes in the immortality of the soul. According to him the essence of man is the **soul** and the **soul** of man is the **spirit of God.**

Men differ from one another, for there are different gradations in the development of the soul. A man whose soul is at the lowest stage of developement is satisfied with the knowledge of sensible things of the world. But those who want to rise higher up have to read the arguments against philosophy. At the highest stage of perfection however man develops on intuitive faculty; and in a state of ecstasy or rapture, he can have direct vision of the Divine Illumination *(Noor-i-Ilahi)*. It is this stage that the soul rises above the world of shadows and reflections and soars up into the world of reality. The mystics have a conviction that they can rise upto this stage wherefrom they can see the manifestation of God in everything of Nature, just as they see Him best in their own souls. The soul in its consciousness of union with God attains the highest bliss. All things then become one in love.'(8)

Rumi says -

Ruh bà a'ql ast o bà ilm ast yàr,
Ruh rà ba Tazi o Turki che kar.
(Wisdom and virtuous deed make the soul's life,
Not racial names and not communal strife.)

TAUHID

The final purpose of life, inherently cherished by every human heart, according to Rumi, is to return to the original state from which we have erred away; it is the realization that the whole world-process is the play of One Supreme Lord. Freedom of the spirit, or deliverence from hands of fear, doubt, sorrow and error, comes to each and every soul, sooner or later, after experience of all kinds of joys and sorrows, sins and merits, depths and heights of life, because all souls are parts of the One Supreme Self - when one obtains *Najat,* or F*ana-Fillah* or annihilation into God, with its accompanying ecstasy of joy, *Lazzat-al-Illahiya*, or *Bliss of God*, he knows that -

Haq jàn-i-jahàn ast, wa jahàn jumla badan;

Tauhìd hami ast; digar shewa o fan."(9)
(One single body - this whole universe; God - its one soul;
spirits, angels all - Its organs and its senses; th' elements.
And all the natural kingdoms are its limbs -
Such the significance of Unity.)

Those who have experienced the realization, for them there is intellectual conviction of identity of one-self with the **Universal Self**; a feeling of great exaltation and a sense of utter security and certainty and they exclaim with the **Bliss of God** -

Man tú shudam, tú man shudì
Man tan shudam, tù jan shudì,
Tà kas na goyad bàd azìn
Man dìgram, tù dìgarì,(10)
(I am none else than Thou, and Thou than I;
I am Thy body and Thou art my Soul.
Let no one say hereafter that I am
Other than Thee, or Thou other than I.)

Rumi exhorts all to aspire for the final purpose of life - union with God. He says -

Happy the moment when we are seated in the palace.
Thou and I, with two forms and with two figures
But with one soul, thou and I."(11)

Again, he exhorts all men in the following words -

Tù baràye wasl kardan àmadì
Nai baràye fast kardan àmadì.(12)

(You have come (into this world
For the sake of union with the Lord
And for separation from Him.)

To attain this state of mind one has to undergo a rigorous discipline and to live eternally in divine ecstasy. To see divine in everything eliminating the not-Divine from it ultimately leads one to live in the Infinite.

After attaining union with the Divine Beloved, our mystic-poet says in his **Odes :**

Makànam là-makan bàshad, nishànam bè-nishàn bàshad;
Nà tan bàshad, na jaan bàshad, keh man az jàn-i-jànànam

(My place is placeless, my trace is traceless.
Neither it is body nor soul; all its life of my Beloved.)(13)

Rumi asserts the joy of that Divine Union, the only and the final cure for all the worlds sorrows, must be, and is, inevitably, unconsciously at first and consciously afterwards, striven for and achieved by all souls.

LOVE

In reality, the great message of Rumi, as of all mystic poets, is centred in Love. He has always sung of love, and announces that it is love which is dominant in every being or thing which originated in God who created world for the manifestation of His love. Our poet says -

Ishq-i-ù paidà wa ma'shuq-ash nihàn;
Yàr bìrún, fitna'-i-ú dar jahàn.(14)

(His love is manifest and the Beloved is hidden;
The Friend is outside and His splendour is in the world.)

He also sings thus -

To nah een bashi, na an, dar zat-i-khwesh
Ay fazún az wahmaha, w-az besh besh;(15)
(In Thy own essence Thou art neither this nor that,
O Thou, who art beyond all conjectures and more than more.)

Again : "That which is the object of love is not the form, whether it be love of this world or of that world." Really, "Beauty in mankind is like gilding." For that beauty of the heart is the lasting beauty; its lips give to drink of the water of life. "Love, whether it be earthly, narrow or selfish, will develop to pure, selfless and divine love and ultimately proceed to that stage, where there will remain no difference between the lover and the Beloved."

But most marvellous of all are the following lines of the *Mesnavi* where is shown that this attraction or love is pervading the whole universe. This is the essence of Rumi's philosophy of Love : "The wisdom of God in destiny and in decree has made us lovers to one another. All the particles of the world, because of that fore-ordainment, are paired together and are in love with their own mate. Every particle of the universe is desiring its mate, just like amber and the leaf of straw. Earth says to the body, "Return. Taken leave of the spirit and come to me like the dust"

It replies, "Yes, but I am fettered, although like you I am weary of separation (The waters seek the moisture of the body, saying, "Come back to us from exile." The ether is calling the heart of the body, saying, "you are of fire, take the way back to your origin." The diseases, caused by the elements pulling without cord, come to shatter the body, so that elements may abandon each other. These elements are four birds with their legs tied together - death, sickness and disease loosen their legs In as much as every part (of the body) seeks the support (i.e. to rejoin to its origin), what must be the state of the soul, a stranger in separation (from its Abode, the nearness of God)? It (the soul) says: "O my base parts, my exile is more bitter, (for) I am celestial. The desire of the body is for green herbs and flowing water, because its origin is from those. The desire of the soul is for Life and the Living One, because its origin is from the Infinite Soul."(16)

If right knowledge is the head, right love is the heart, and right action is the limbs, of organic, psycho-physical, bodilymental life; Love is the joy of life. Even **Ishq-i-Majazi**, love human, is but the reflection, in the limited sense, of **Ishq-i-Haqiqi**, the Love Divine.

There is a saying in Persian -

Ma badà hèch dil bè ishq-bàzi
Agar bàshad haqìqì yà majàzi ;
Majàz ayìna dar-è - ruy-e man'ist
Sar - è - ì n jalwa ham dar kù-e-màn' ìst'
(Be there no heart wholly devoid of Love -

Be that love human or be it divine;
For human love too mirrors love divine;
The flame of this lights up the path of that).

To Rumi Love is the essence of all religions and panacea for all the ills of the phenomenal world. He says -

Shàd bàsh ai ishq-i-khush sauda-i-mà
Ai tabìb jumla~i-illat hai mà
Mazhab-i-ishq az hama-millat judà-st
Àshqàn rà mazhab-o-millat khudà-st
(Be happy O my Love of nice intoxication,
O physician of all my ailments.
The religion of love is different from all the religions,)
For lovers, God is their religion.)

Even a Western writer has well said -

"God is love in essence. Love is God in solution. In so much as we love we are in God and God is in us, and in so far as we do not love we are without God, in this world or any other."

God is Love, Love is God, because God is the **Universal Self**, and the sensing, the feeling, of this Unity, is the **Love Divine**, or **Ishq-i-Haqiqi**.

To Rumi, Love is the regenerating spirit of the Universe and an antidote to all human perplexities and vices. Love brings forth beautiful things and thoughts into this world. No words can convey a complete picture of Love as he understood it, although he has himself described it again and again in poetry. All those descriptions placed together give some idea of this great force in the affairs of men.

While Rumi again and again emphasizes the role of Love in the spiritual and moral uplift of man and in the creation of Perfect Men he does not underrate the role of Intellect. He sees the future welfare of mankind in the adequate blending of **Intellect** with **Love.**

Poets in all languages, mystics in all countries, and metaphysicians in all religions have stressed the importance of **Love** in the development of human character, and they have described what they understand by **Love** in beautiful language; but rarely has any one laid so much stress on **Love** as a factor in the development of human personality or used the term **Love** in such a wide sense as Rumi.

MYSTICISM

On an enquiry, what is *Tasawwuf (Mysticism)*? Rumi replies, "(It is) to be forgetfulness of this world. '

What are the basic principles of mysticism? They are that the knowledge of reality cannot be obtained through the senses. If we are to reach reality, we must withdraw from the world of sense into that of inner experience. The sense can reach us only upto the **World of Appearance** but not to the **World of Reality**. In order to reach the **World of Reality**, we have to take recourse to intuitive reason which is, in fact, the attitude of the mystics. The one aim of the mystics is to disconnect themselves of this world of phenomena and to be reunited with their Origin where they eternally rest.

The mystic's path along which the Sufi travels to his goal is a logical process which is based upon its own epistemology. According to this Knowledge is of two kinds, namely -

1. *Ilam* or **Intellectual Knowledge**, or Knowledge through discursive reason.
2. *M'arifat* or Gnosis, or **Intuitional Knowledge**, or immediate Knowledge.

The instruments of the first kind of Knowledge are the sense and the understanding, through wliich **Knowledge of the Universe** is obtained. The second kind is the **Knowledge of Realities** which gives direct insight into Truth. This Knowledge proceeds directly from the **Universal Reason** to human reason - it is **Divine Knowledge.** Unlike **Intellectual Knowledge** which is probable, inferential, limited, mediate the **Intuitional Knowledge (*m'arifat*** or **gnosis**) is certain, ineffable, perfect and direct. The object of the **Intuitional Knowledge** is the attainment of cosmic consciousness, beatific vision, absorption in ecstatic union with Truth. The light of Intuitional Knowledge bursts upon the soul when it is in a state of utter tranquillity, harmony and purity. This state is induced by means of a psychological discipline which cleanses the heart and leads the soul to the realization of its unity with God.

Rumi believes intuition to be a source of human knowledge and that the realm of mysticism is real. Mysticism can also be considered as another form of intellect. *Intellectual knowledge* or *Thought* and ***Intuition*** are not essentially opposed. They spring from the same source and complement each other. The one grasps

Reality piecemeal, the other grasps it in its wholeness. The one fixes the gaze on the temporal aspect the other on the eternal aspect of Reality. Both seek visions of the same Reality which reveals itself to them according to their functions in life. In fact, intuition, as *Bergson* (1859-1949 A.D.), the French philosopher, put it rightly, is only a higher kind of intellect. Maulana Rumi was aware that Reality is not only unknown but is unknownable by purely intellectual methods, and the mystic sense, or the intuition, in man remains the only short cut to Reality.

Mysticism has been aptly defined by *Evelyn Underhill* :

"I understand Mysticism to be expression of the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the Transcendental Order; whatever be the theological formula under which that order is understood. This tendency, in great mystics, gradually captures the whole field of consciousness; it dominates their life, and in the experience called mystic union (the Ecstasy, the Absorption in God, the *Fana* of the Sufis) attains its end. Whether that end be the God of "the various religions", the World-Soul of Pantheism, the Absolute of Philosophy, the desire to attain it and the movement towards it - so long as this is a genuine life process and not an intellectual speculation - is the proper subject of Mysticism".(18)

Mysticism is the very soul of classical Persian poetry. What is mystic poetry? Mystic poetry is a mood in which the mystic poet enters the Divine realm, sees the celestial light and hears heavenly music. All these fill him with ecstasies and rapture. A mystic poet retains his experiences and relates some of these to others when he returns to himself.

Persian poetry abounds with mysticism which contributes largely to its great charm. It has been beautifully illustrated by Sayed Jamaluddin Urfi, who came from Shiraz in Iran and settled down in India in the times of Mughal Emperor Akbar, in the following verse in Persian -

Har giz mago kèh ka'afa ze butkhanà khushtar ast,
Har ja kèh hast jalwah-i-jananà khushtar ast.

(Do not say Kaaba is better than the idol-house. Wherever there is the beauty of the Beloved, that place is better.)

Whereas with others the fire of passion grows weaker with age, and intensity of emotion and fervour tend to disappear, for mystics age brings new experiences, new raptures and new ecstasies. With age the mystic poet advances mystically and these new experiences in themselves generate an impassioned eloquence and spontaneity. Rumi epitomized the entire history of the phenomenal world as viewed by the mystic - the progress of man out of God, into the universe, and back again to God. As a mystic, Rumi was too much in earnest to care for the incongruities which draw upon the censure of fastidious critics. As a poet, he sought to invest the Sufi doctrine with every charm that his genius could inspire. In the words of Nicholson, "In sublimity of thought and grandeur of expression he (Maulana Rumi) challanges the greatest masters of songs; time after time he strikes a lofty note without effort; the clearness of his vision gives a wonderful exaltation to his verse, which beats against the sky; his odes throb with passion and rapture-enkindling power; and his diction is choice and unartifical." (19)

Rumi's healthy mysticism enabled him to portray healthy sentiments which interest healthy minds in all ages and in all countries.

ANNIHILATION OF THE SELF

Renunciation of worldly enjoyment and poverty are not virtues in themselves, but they are expressions of one's selfless devotion to God. According to Maulana Rumi the mystics practise self-abnegation, sacrificing vulgar passions for the sake of Truth. In this way, they experience death which comes before death. This death is called ***Fana-fillah (annihilation in God)*** which results in ***Baqa- gillah (permanent existence in God).*** It was in this strain of thought that ***Mansur al-Hallaj*** said ***"Ana'l-Haqq"*** - 'I am the Truth : I am merged in the thought of the Absolute and have forgotton my seperate existence The annihilation of the self, gnosis or ***ma'rifat,*** consists merely in the progressive removal of the obstruction in the way of complete action, in killing the alleged considerations that produce hesitation before a move is made, and increases it does not decrease — our cheerfulness and joy. This is known to those who, by experience, have had their sympathies enlarged, and who entering into other people's lives, become quick and effective in their action. Even in our own lives, several of us, besides, do undergo many extinctions, when our outlook changes so totally that we become dead to our former selves.

"A mystic who is always anxious for the knowledge and love of God, is ready to undergo any amount of hardship to remove the curtain that veils him from God. In a state of ecstasy, he sees reality in everything around him. He tries to lose the consciousness of individual things and of the self, to be absorbed in universal consciousness and love of God. Through ecstasy the heart can communicate with Him and can become one with Him. This state is called ***Fana*** or passing away. In ***Fana*** the mind withdraws from all other consciousness and concentrates its attention upon the thought of God and God alone. The final stage of ***Fana*** marks the beginning of ***Baqa,*** the unitive state, in which the mystic lives in the consciousness of God."(20)

PERFECT MAN

According to the mystic-philosopher ***Ibn al-Arabi*** (1164-1240 A.D.), the ***Perfect Man*** is an actual microcosm because he manifests all God's attributes and perfection and that such manifestation is incomplete without the full realization of his essential unity with God. The Perfect Man is a miniature of reality. This doctrine was further developed by Maulana Rumi and, subsequently, by'Abdul Karim al-Jili (1366-1408 A.D.). Based on the theme of *Ibn al-Arabi,* Jalaluddin Rumi describes his Perfect or Ideal man in the following terms -

i) The Perfect man is one who has realized his transcendental or Eternal Self, which is uncreated or divine.

ii) It is possible for every individual to realize it; it is the end and goal of life.

iii) The Perfect man is in immediate touch with the Supreme Being; neither prophets nor angels intervene between the two.

iv) The Perfect man can work miracles which does not mean the annihilation of causation but only bringing into play causes that are not within the reach of common experience. He even goes so far as to assert that the Perfect man is a miracle in himself.

v) The Adam of the Quran represents the Perfect man to whom the angels paid homage. The Perfect man does not represent only a possibility. In every age there is someone who has realized it.

Man occupies a supreme position on account of his unique and unparallaled nature. Only those who know how to contemplate God perfectly know the dignity of man and his place in the universe. The Perfect Man is in immediate contact with Reality. The Perfect Man is perfect both because he is a manifestation of God, and because he can realize in his mystical experience, the significance of his essential oneness with God. The Perfect Man is not perfect unless he realises his essential oneness with God; that is what distinguishes an ordinary man from the Perfect Man.

Rumi further says that it is open to us all to be Perfect men who do not necessarily represent an aristocracy. Every individual can strive to achieve this state.(21) The Perfect Man or the Ideal Man, according to him has to work in cooperation with others to bring about the kingdom of heaven on earth, and he cannot exist independently of the group to which he belongs. The Ideal Man is a miniature of reality which status he obtains by full realization of his essential unity with God.

Developing on the theme propounded by Ibn al-Arabi, Rumi observes that man in perfection is the image of God. Perfect Man is a mirror reflecting His names and attributes. He is microcosm in which the Absolute becomes conscious of itself in all its diverse parts. Man reaches this Perfection by spiritual training and mystical ascent. As the Absolute descends by many stages into man or bestows boons and blessings to him, man by ascent returns to the Divine. In that state "His eye becomes the eye of God, his word the word of God, and his life the life of God."

There is some resemblance between **Aristotle's Ideal Man** and **Rumi's Perfect Man;** the latter further developed it. Aristotle defines his Ideal Man as follows :

"He is of a disposition to do men service, though he is ashamed to have a service done to him. To confer a kindness is a mark of superiority; to receive one is a mark of subordination.........He never feels malice, and always forgets and passes over injuries. His carriage is sedate, his voice deep, his speech measured; he is not given to hurry, for he is concerned about only a few things; he is not prone to vehemence for he thinks nothing very important."(22)

Although Rumi's Perfect Man slightly differs from Aristotle's Ideal Man, some of his phrases bear a stamp of the Greek philosopher's thoughts.

According to Rumi, the Perfect Man acquires a free personality, free not in the sense that he is no longer subject to law, but free in the sense that he discovers the ultimate source of law within the depths of his own consciousness. He also believes in the **Eternal Recurrence of Perfect Man** and that in every age there is an individual who is a Perfect Man.

GOOD AND EVIL

This world, and its various formations, appears to us only through the contradictions. Here comes the concept of good and evil. Everything good or evil is always relative, whereas God is Absolute. Maulana Rumi says -

Bas nihàni hà ba-zid paidà shuwad
Chùnki Haqq-ra nìst zid, pinhàn shuwad.(23)

(God created (all) sorrows and sufferings, for this purpose that the happiness might be manifest through the opposite. All hidden things are shown (to us) by their opposites : as God has no opposite. He is hidden (from us)).

Another lesson that we learn from Rumi is that our actions, though the effect of divine agency, are freely willed by us, so that we have no right to make God responsible for them. If sinners are conscious of acting under compulsion, why do they yield to it so readily and why do they afterwards feel ashamed and guilty? The mystics have made quite clear -

Har che az zain o shain-i-shumàst,
Sar ba sar maqtazà-i- a'in-i shumàst.
Har che a'ina-i shumà taqàza kard
Jaud-i-faiz-i-Man huwaidà kard.'(24)

(Good, evil both are all your demand,
Whatever your heart desired. My bounty gave.) .

There is always a battle raging between good and evil within each human being and it is upto men who are providentially endowed with intelligence to discern what is good and what is evil and follow the path accordingly.

It is further emphasized that the wise feel both are sins since both do bind the soul unto the whirling wheel of change. The wise man says -

Chun nèk o bad as Khudàe dìdand,
Rùy-az hama do dar kashìdand.(25)
(Since the wise saw good and evil both from God,
Therefore from both they drew their heart aside.)

The evil that men see in others is the relfection of their own.

'You do not see clearly the evil in yourself,
Else you would hate yourself with all your Soul."(26)

Our mystic-poet sings that -

All, good and evil, parts of the dervesh be,
And whoso is not so, no dervesh is he.(27)

The Sufis, with their extraordinary knowledge and perception, opine that evil is a ***not-being*** which is the privation and absence of ***being.*** According to them everything is ultimately good; evil is purely subjective having no objective existence. They give a beautiful illustration of how evil can become transformed. They explain that a pool of standing water becomes dirty when dirt is thrown into it, and remains so. It takes the colour of whatever it comes in contact with, and retains it. But if it can get connected with a perennially flowing stream, it becomes, sooner or later, purified. So long as an individual remains an individual and considers himself responsible for the activities that appear to flow from him, these activities leave their traces on him. But if, somehow, he is able to become one with the Universal Life, the activities become those of the Universal Life and cease to have a moral colouring.

"Evil can be turned into good by the righteous activities of man. The world is the manifestation of a single principle; it is a perfect whole where every suffering, pain and evil has got its place. The world is the place for soul- making, and, for this purpose, evil is a necessity, as the soul can develop and perfect itself only by struggling with evils. The creation of good out of evil is the main function of human souls in this world."(28)

ACTION

Rumi is intolerant to indolence, idleness and lethargy. He subscribes to the idea that ceaseles activity and endless struggling to attain personal freedom and immortality is preferred -

Koshish behudà ba az khaftagì

(Useless striving is better than inaction.)

Rumi also puts us on guard against deceiving ourselves into indolence or carelessness, or self-indulgence in vice, under cover of a false self-surrender to God, and of the pretence that whatever we do even obviously immoral or evil, is done under impulsion from God. In this is the great fallacy. According to him causes and effects must be equated. For evil, or immoral action, we must be punished and for goodness and righteousness we must be rewarded.

Man also carries his principle of life within himself.

Injunctions and prohibitions, praise and blame, reward and punishment would be sheer mockery, if the doer of an action had not been free to choose. Struggling against ***destiny*** is the very destiny of man. In this struggle his hidden, unrealized potentialities are actualized. Action, therefore, is intended to purify man and prepare him for self-knowledge. Self-knowledge helps in exercising self-control which helps in paving the way for reaching the final goal union with the Supreme.

"The Sufism of Rumi is not the Sufism of a fatalist, who shuns action, shirks work and depends only on the Will of God resigning himself entirely to it. A Sufi must endeavour hard and work strenuously for the achievement of his ideal and after putting in all efforts, he should depend on the Will of God. A person went to Prophet Muhammad telling him that he left his camel in the desert to the care of God, and the Prophet remonstrated him that first he should tie up camel's knee and then depend on God's grace".(29)

Summing up Rumi's views on action ***Khalifa Abdul Hakim*** has remarked that, according to Rumi, God is not an abstract and absolutely attributeless Being who sits aside eternally unmoved. But He is the most active Being and loves activity. Every day He is busy with something new. The sovereign ruling the Universe cannot sit idle. He loves movement; therefore, even a useless effort is better than utter passivity.(30)

Mysticism before Rumi was considered to be a passive fatalism as enunciated by earlier Sufis, where man has no choice but to resign to the Will of God, but Rumi's mysticism is active and dynamic and it inspires man to break off the shackles of his limitation of vision enforced upon him by the narrow outlook of the ritual side of his religion and to come out of it to realize his Self in its full stature. This, in fact, is an utter refutation of quietism and inactivity, generally but mistakenly, attributed to mysticism.

SERVICE TO MANKIND

Rumi believes that service to man is service to God. He stresses on rendering service to mankind and subscribes to the dictum from Hadis Sharif :

Saiyad-al-qaum, khadima-hum
(The leader is chief servant of the tribe.)

and also affirms that -

An ke khidmat kard, ù makhdùm shud;
An ke khud rà did, ù mahroom shud.(31)
(He who served others was by others served.
He who looked but to himself was thrust aside.)

According to him self must be negated and freed from egoism by serving others -

Where Self exists, God is not;
Where God exists, there is no Self.

It is because of ego a man develops ***I-ness*** and thus becomes self-oriented and self-assertive. Self-love, or self-assertion, or egoism, leads one to perversion and away, from God; hence it is a great malady. To overcome this malady, selfless service to mankind is the remedy prescribed. By rendering self-less service to fellow beings, man is able to conquer his egoism, or self-will, and this gives way to the Will of God and destroys the ego altogether—

The highest summit of this life is,
Sacrifice of 'me' and 'mine';
He, who does self denial own.
Will gain oneness with Him alone.

He further emphasizes, taking reference from Hadis Sharif :

Afzal-al-ashghàl khidmat al-unnàs
(Finest of prayers - Service of Man)

and says -

Kasè mardè tamam ast az tamàmì-
Kunad bà khwajagì kare ghulàmì.(32)
(He is the perfect man who, being lord,
Can still to serve the lowliest afford).

This marks the dawn of spiritual enlightenment where the ego-centric man passing away from ***self-hood {fana)*** realizes the nature of his true being and merging his ego in ***Super Ego {baqa)*** proceeds for union with the ***Supreme Being.***

NEGATION OF RITUALS

Rumi, like most mystics, cared not a little for rites, rituals, creeds, conventions, forms, traditions or dogmas. According to him rites and creeds count for little with God who dwells neither in mosque nor church nor temple, but in the pure heart. The essential thing is a complete transformation, only to be wrought by ardent faith and humble prayer. He did not believe in the formal prayer -

Namàze zàhidàn qadd o sujùd-ast
Namàzè àshiqàn tark-è-wajùd ast.(33)
(The formal prayer is - sitting up and down;
The real - our own egoism to drown.)

Similarly, he decries against pilgrimages and believes -

Hajj che bàshad? Ze khud safar kardan.
Bà Kujà? Jànibè Hidàyat - kar.(34)
(What is the Pilgrimage? To run away
From the small self. And travel witherward?
To the Great Self, whence all true guidance comes.)

According to Rumi, the Holy of Holies lives in the heart of man

Ba ehsàn àsuda kardan dilè
Beh az alfraka't ba har manzilè
.Dil ba dast àwar ke hajjè-akbar ast;
Az hazàràn Ka'aba yak dil behtar ast.
Dil guzar-gahè Jalilè Akbar ast,
Ka'aba bun-gàhè Khalilê àzir ast.(35)
(To bring joy to one heart, by loving help,
Is better than a thousand litanies.
To reach and clasp a human heart with Love-
This is the Greater Pilgrimage; the other.
To the stone Ka'aba, is the smaller one.
Better far is one living human heart

Than a whole thousand Ka'abas built of stone;
Within the former lives the life of God,
The other's the dead work of Abra'm's hands.)

"To win other people's heart", says Rumi, "is the greatest pilgrimage; and one heart is worth more than a thousand Ka'abahs. Ka'abah is mere cottage of Abraham; but the heart is the very home of God."(36)

MURSHID OR GUIDE

"Go seek at once a friend of God," says Rumi, "When you have done so, God would become your friend and the road of light will again be visible." That is, to make oneself developed in the spiritual path, one must take a spiritual guide or ***Murshid*** and through his help he will be enlightened.

The relationship of ***Murshid*** (teacher) and ***Talib*** (disciple) is indeed a cornerstone in Sufism. ***Talib*** literally means a seeker and ***Murshid*** is the person who is able to satisfy the seeking impulse. The ***Murshid*** is the intercessor who gets divine powers delegated to his disciple from the Unseen. All actions done according to his instructions are necessarily good, even though apparently they may appear to be otherwise. Without his help, it is impossible to get on to the right path. Perfect devotion to the teacher ensures speedy realization of the Truth.

The ***Murshid*** has to be in possession of his disinterested benevolence, his dispassionate yet compassionate desirelessness, his perseverent and independent gaze upon the ***Truth*** and act as perfect administrator of his disciple.

The ***Murshid*** arranges circumtances for his disciple's growth, for the development of the seeds he has thrown into his soil. The weaknesses of his disciples are made to expose themselves to their view and then drop off : and this is done, not by a word of mouth, but by the circumstances arranged for that purpose.(37)

The ***Murshid*** never argues. No proof is ever advanced. But he gives the disciples wonderful illustrations and beautiful parables to fix in them what they wish to. The conviction comes to the disciples direct from their heart; these parables and illustrations probably help in the rearrangement of the mind with which the disciples are hampered.(38)

The love of the ***Murshid*** for the seeker is said to be greater than that of the seeker for his ***Murshid.*** His love is the very essence of love, and so, tremendous in intensity. But he releases only as much as the seeker can bear. He attends to all the details of his life, outer (***Zahir)*** as well as inner (***Batin);*** sometimes he has to wait and watch from afar; but his irresistable love draws, and keeps drawing, till the seeker, whom he has chosen to make his own, accepts the *Murshid* consciously.

Chunkè kardè zàt murshid rà qabùl
Ham khuda dar zàt-ish àmad ham rasùl.
(When the refuge of Murshid is sought
with a pure, innocent heart.
Then God, Prophet and all the Great Souls
are realized in the form of Murshid).

Rumi himself was a perfect ***Murshid*** for his multitudinous disciples which can be gleaned from his Discourses.

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9. Bhagvan Das, *op. cit,* p. 227.
10. Ibid.
11. *Legacy of Islam,* edited by Sir Thomas Arnold (1931), p. 219.
12. Bhagvan Das, *op. cit,* p. 448. In the *Mesnavi,* this was a revelation which came to Moses.
13. Idries Khan, *op. cit,* p. 112.
14. Paul, H. C., *op. cit,* p.35.
15. Ibid.
16. *Mesnavi,* Vol. Ill, 4421 ff.
17. Bhagvan Das, *op. cit,* p. 382.
18. Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism,* pp. 9-10.

19. Nicholson in *Selections from Diwan-iShams-i-Tabriz, p. XI.*
20. Chopra, R. M. *op. cit,* p. 28.
21. Sayed Abdul Valid, *Iqbal : His Art and Thought* (1959), p. 69.
22. *Ethics,* IV, p. 3.
23. Paul, H. C., *op. cit,* p. 38.
24. Bhagvan Das, *op. cit,* p. 186.
25. Ibid., p. 330.
26. *The Legacy of Islam, p. 235.*
27. Arberry, A. J., *Discourses of Rumi* (1961), p. **88**.
28. Chopra, R. M., *op. cit,* p. 29.
29. Prof. Hira Lall Chopra, *Indo-Iranica,* Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 31-32.
30. *The Metaphysics of Rumi (1932), p. 109.*
31. Bhagvan Das, *op. cit,* p. 268.
32. Ibid., p. 550.
33. Ibid., p. 547.
34. Ibid., p. 548.
35. Ibid., p. 533.
36. Muhammad Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (Lahore Ed.), pp. 82-83.
37. Chopra, R. M. *op. cit,* p. 30.
38. Ibid., p. 31.

CHAPTER - V

DISCOURSES OF RUMI

Jalaluddin Rumi is also the author of ***Diwan-i'Shams-i-Tabriz*** which is dedicated to his spiritual preceptor, Shamsuddin Tabrizi. In the ***Diwan*** we find the best specimens of Sufistic lyrics replete with truths of spirituality expressed in simple and forceful language. The lyrics ***(ghazals)*** number about two thousand five hundred and relate the cardinal philosophy of Sufism and are scalable only by the highly developed and disciplined Sufis. There is a divine rapture running through the lyrics and those who are well versed in Sufism can derive ecstasy from them. Many a Sufi-poet has derived his inspiration from these verses and achieved salvation by transcending all barriers which impede his progress to realization.

Rumi is also the author of a treatise, in prose, entitled ***Fi hi Ma Fi hi*** - literally meaning "In it what is in it." This is a quotation from a poem of the mystic philosopher Ibn al-Arabi which has been explained by some as meaning: "There is, to be found in ***this*** book what is contained in ***that*** book, this is, the ***Mesnavi."*** The greater part of this treatise is addressed to ***Muinuddin,*** the ***Parwana*** of Rum. It is in fact a collection of **Jalaluddin Rumi*'s Kalam,*** that is, his sayings and discourses numbering seventyone. These sayings and discourses are his quintessential utterances and contain deep moral lessons, gems of wisdom and hidden advices which form the ethos of Maulana Rumi's mysticism and his philosophy of life and urge patience, humility, hospitality, generosity, amity, understanding, gratitude and love for the Divine Beloved. These have now been translated into English by A. J. Arberry, who has based his translation on the authoritative annotations made by Badi al-Zaman Furuzanfar in his Teheran edition of 1952, under the title of ***Discourses of Rumi*** (1961). Some of the advices, lessons and gems of wisdom from his discourses are enumerated here.

MAN - THE ASTROLABE OF GOD

An astrolabe was a compact instrument for observing the positions of celestial bodies by the astronomers, now superceded by sextant.

Rumi says man is the **Astrolabe** of God. The meaning of this is explained by the saying of the Prophet, "He that knows himself knows his Lord." Man is God's astrolabe, and just as by means of an astrolabe the astronomer discovers the conditions of the heavenly spheres and observes their revolutions and the influences and motions of the stars, so when man who has received from God the gift of self-knowledge by means of the astrolabe by his existence which is a divine mirror, he continually beholds the manifestations of the **Divine Beauty** or, in other words, just as the copper **Astrolabe** is the mirror of the heavens, so the man is the astrolabe of God. When God causes a man to have self-knowledge or knowledge of Him and to know Him and to be familiar with Him, through the astrolabe of his being he beholds moment by moment and flash by flash the manifestation of God and **His Infinite Beauty** which is reflected in his mirror, that is, man.(1)

PAIN

Why did God create this real thing, pain? As long as it lasts, it is certainly more real than anything else. Another question arises, could there not be a universe without pain? The answer to this is : no, certainly not, unless it be a universe without a relish. No risks, no struggles, no failures, and no pain - it is unthinkable. Pain takes the manifestation of separation of the Soul from the Universal Soul and its constant yearning to have direct communion with the Creator.

It is pain, says Rumi, that guides a man in every enterprise; until there is an ache within him, a passion and a yearning for that thing arising within him, he will never strive to attain it.

Without pain that thing remains for him unprocureable, whether it be success in this world or salvation in the next, whether he aims at being a merchant or a king, a scientist or an astronomer or, for that matter, anything. Unless there is a burning desire, an ache within the soul for higher things, those loftier aims will remain unattainable.(2)

ABSORPTION

If the heart is totally absorbed, all the other elements such as ear, eye, tongue and other members of the body are obliterated in it.

From the stand point of reality, according to Rumi, the senses are a unity, but from the standpoint of form they are separate one from another. When one member of the body is affected by absorption, all the members are absorbed in it.

Similarly, the term *'istighraq'* (absorption in God) is applied to one who has no conscious existence or initiative or movement. Any action that proceeds from him is not his own. If he is still struggling in the water or if he cries out, 'Oh, I am drowning', he cannot be said to be in the state of 'absorption'.

Absorption is accompanied by a fear of God, which is different from all other fears; it is realization that all human states come from God, and is an actual experience and not a logical proof of God's existence. In absorption the mystic passes away into God. The terms obedience and disobedience, righteousness and sin then become irrelevant.

Take the famous utterance of **Mansur al-Hallaj, "I am God".** Some men reckon it as a great pretension; but "I am God" is, in fact, a great humility. The man who says, "I am the servant of God" asserts that two exist, one himself and the other God. But he who says "I am God" has naughted himself and cast himself to the winds. He says, "I am God" : that is, "I am not, He is all, nothing has existence but God, I am pure non-entity, I am nothing". In this the humility is greater and there is total self-abasement. (3)

EVIL PERCEPTION

According to Rumi, all evil qualities - oppression, hatred, envy, greed, mercilessness, pride — when they are within yourself, do not pain you. When you perceive them in another, then you shy away and are pained.

A man feels no disgust at his own scab and abscess; he will dip his affected hand into the broth and lick his fingers without turning in the least sqeamish. But if he sees a tiny abscess or half a scratch on another's hand, he shies away from that man's broth and has no stomach for it whatever.

Evil qualities are just like scabs and abscesses; when they are within a man himself he is not pained by them, but when he perceives them even to a small degree in another he is pained and disgusted.(4)

MULTIPLICITY OF RELIGIONS

There have always been two or three religions and war and fighting have always gone on between them. Rumi says, "How do you want me to make the religion one? It will be one only in the next world, at the resurrection. As for this present world, here it is not possible, for here each one has a different desire and design. Here unity is impossible; it will be possible only at the resurrection, when all men will be one and will fix their gaze on one place, and will all have one ear and one tongue."(5)

KINDS OF CREATURES

Rumi maintains that there are three kinds of creatures. First there are the **angels,** who are pure intelligence. Worship and service and the rememberance of God are their nature and their food : that they eat and by that they live. Just as the fish in the water lives by the water; its mattress and pillow is the water. Angels are not under any burden of obligation. In asmuch as the angel is divested and pure of lust what favour does he confer if he does not gratify his lust or conceive and indulge carnal desire? Since he is pure of these things, he has not to struggle against them.

Secondly, there are the **beasts,** who are pure lust, having no intelligence to prohibit them. They too are under no obligation. Lastly, there remains **man,** who is a compound of intelligence and lust. He is half angel, half animal; half snake, half fish. The fish draws him towards water, the snake draws him towards the earth. He is forever in tumult and battle. He whose intelligence overcomes his lust is higher than the angels; he whose lust overcomes his intelligence is lower than the beasts'.(6)

The angel is saved by knowledge.
The beast by brute ignorance;
Midway between, and struggling -
Such a predicament is man's!(7)

TELEPATHY

Rumi has quite often discussed the topic of telepathy in his ***Mesnavi,*** and also in his discourses, as to how telepathic communication between true mystics renders speech superfluous. According to him thought is the attractive force and not the expression of thought. Expressions could be multitudinous but the controlling thought is one. For thought to be pure and true it is necessary for a man to keep his discriminative faculty clear of all ulterior objects, and to concentrate his purpose on seeking communication thereby. Words are the pretext. It is the element of congeneity that draws one man to another, not words. This congeneity between them is a hidden and not a visible thing and becomes the source of communication. (8)

PRAYER AND FAITH

Rumi says, "Respect for any thing is what is appropriate to the occasion." When a man is at prayer he should not indulge in pointless talk with his friends or relatives but must concentrate on prayer alone. His inattention to his friends, kith and kin while engaged in prayer, is the very acme of attention and courtesy, since he does not on their account breakaway from his religious performance and absorption and does not become distracted. In this way he saves them from Divine reproach. Therefore it is the acme of attention and courtesy when he has guarded against what would involve them in Divine chastisement.

In answer to a query made by the ***Parvana*** of Rum whether there is any other way nearer to God than prayer, Maulana Rumi said that although prayer is quite efficacious but a complete absorption, a state of unconsciousness, which is the ***"soul*** of formal prayer, and prayer being only the **b*ody'*,** can bring one nearer to God.

Therefore, the ***'soul'*** of prayer is better than prayer the ***'body'*** and still better than all is the ***faith.*** Faith without prayer is beneficial, whereas prayer without faith confers no benefit. Prayers in every religion are of a different kind; whereas faith does not change in any religion because its states, its locus and the rest are invariable.(9)

OBJECT IS ONE

Words are often spoken for the sake of those, who need words; the man who understands without words hears the message of heaven and earth proclaiming' God their Creator.

Rumi tells a story of a Turkish king who did not know a word of Arabic but applauded the work of an Arab poet. He explains that it was not the words themselves but the purport of the words that really signified. So it was realized that the root of the matter was the object in view and not the words.

So is the case with the Sufis. Though to outward form they are of various kinds and differ widely in their states and acts and words; phenomena are many, the ultimate object of all is one, namely, the quest of God.'(10)

DISCRIMINATION

Rumi counsels that it behoves a man to strip his discriminative faculty of all prejudices and to seek a friend in faith. Faith consists in knowing who is one's true friend. When, however, a man has spent his life in the company of people who lack discrimination, his own discriminative faculty becomes feeble and he is unable to recognize the true friend. There is a saying in Persian -

Sohbat-i-sàleh tera sàleh kunad;
Sohbat-i-tàleh tera tàleh kunad.
(Company of the good makes you good;
Company of the bad makes you bad.)

Discrimination is that one quality which is hidden in man. If you look at a mad man, he possesses hands and feet and looks very much like normal beings but lacks discrimination. Discrimination is that subtle essence which is within every normal man. Men occupy themselves with nurturing physical attributes, or substance, without developing their faculty of discrimination. The faculty of discrimination must be developed because the physical subsists through the other, whereas the other is by no means dependent upon the physical for its subsistence.'(11)

THE KNOWER AND THE GNOSTIC / ASCETIC

Rumi asserts that the knower, from the linguistic standpoint, is a man of higher degree than the gnostic. God is called the Knower, but must not be called the Gnostic. Gnostic means one who did not know, and then came to know; and this does not apply to God. From the standpoint of common usage however the gnostic is the greater; for gnostic is used to denote one who knows the world, transcending proof, by direct vision and face to face. By usage such a man is called a gnostic.

It has been said, "The knower is better than a hundred ascetics." How should the knower be better than hundred ascetics? Maulana Rumi says, "After all, the ascetic practises asceticism on the basis of knowledge; asceticism without knowledge is impossible. For what is asceticism? To forsake the world, and to turn one's face to obedience and the world to come. Well, it is necessary to know this world, its foulness and impermanence, to know the charm and permanence and everlastingness of the world to come, and to strive to obey, saying, 'How shall I obey, and what is obedience?' All these things are knowledge. Hence asceticism is impossible without knowledge. Hence the ascetic is both knower and ascetic.

'This **'knower'** who is better than a hundred **'ascetics'** is nevertheless real, only its meaning has not been understood. There is another knowledge which God gives a man after this asceticism and the knowledge which he possessed at first. This second knowledge is the fruit of that knowledge and asceticism. Assuredly such a knower is better than hundred thousand ascetics.

"Let me cite a parallel. A man planted a tree, and the tree bore fruit. Assuredly, the tree that bore fruit is better than a hundred trees that have not borne fruit. For it may well be that the latter trees will never bear at all, since many diseases intervene. A pilgrim who reaches the Ka'aba is better than the pilgrim who is still travelling in the desert. There is fear with regard to the latter, whether he will reach the Ka'aba or no; whereas the former has really reached the Ka'aba."

Moral : One certainty is better than a hundred doubts. (12)

THE GUIDE

In reply to the ***Parwana's*** query : "Since God is of such loving kindness, then everyone who seeks in truth shall find". Rumi answers : "But without a guide this does not come to pass." According to him the Guide ***(Pir*** or ***Murshid)*** is akin to intellect in the body of a man and acts like a commander.

So long as the subject members of the body are obedient to intellects, all the body's affairs proceed well and perfectly; but when they are not obedient, all its affairs come to disorder. Just as the intellect is commander in the midst of the body, so the disciples or ***murids,*** together with their several intellects, knowledge, speculation, and learning are in relation to the guide all unalloyed body, and he is the intellect in the midst of them. When the disciples or ***murids,*** who are the body, are not obedient to that intellect (the guide) their affairs all fall into confusion; but when they are obedient to this intellect (the guide), their affairs proceed well and perfectly and the way is paved by the guide for them to tread in order to seek and find the ***Truth***.*(13)*

HOPE OF GOD

"It behoves us not to break off hope of God", says Rumi. Hope is the head of the road to security. Even if one does not wish to travel upon that road, at least he can guard the head of that road. One should always choose the way of straightness which will eventually lead him to God. One should always place one's hope in God who will fulfil his avowed desire.(14)

RESTLESSNESS OF MAN

In every man there is a passion, an agony, an itch, an importunity such that, though that a hundred thousand worlds were his own, yet he would not rest nor find repose. These people dabble in eveiy trade and craft and office; they devote themselves to all kinds of study of different sciences; they resort to all kinds of means, fair and foul, and take no repose; because they have not attained the object of their quest. They are always hungry for more and more, contentment is far away from them, and, inspite of having these so-called pleasures and pursuits, they are unhappy. The more they acquire worldly possessions, the more unhappy they become. Rumi explains : Happy is he who the quicker becomes vigilant and aware, compromises with the prevailing circumtances, continues with ceaseless activity in his life and achieves contentment. Such a man will always have a tranquil mind and will be closer to God.(15)

LOVE AND BEAUTY

Rumi maintains that whoever is loved is beautiful but this statement is not reversible; it does not necessarily follow that whoever is beautiful is loved. Beauty is a part of loveableness, and loveableness is the root principle. If a thing is loved it is of course a beautiful thing; a part of thing cannot exist apart from its whole and is inherent in that whole. Citing the example of Laila and Majnun he said that in Majnun's time there were many girls more beautiful than Laila, yet they were not loved of Majnun. It is not the form that one loves howsoever beautiful it may be; it is the substance which one loves and anything which is loved is beautiful.(16)

DANGER IN ASSOCIATING WITH KINGS

According to Rumi, the danger of associating with kings consists not in the fact you may lose your life; one has to lose one's life in the end. The danger arises from the fact that when kings enter upon the scene and the spell of their influence gains strength, the man who keeps company with them and lays claim to their friendship and accepts gifts from them will inevitably speak in accordance with their wishes. He will even receive their evil views with the utmost attention and will not be able to gainsay them.

That is where the danger lies, in that it leads to the detriment of the true faith. When one cultivates their interest, the other interest, which is fundamental to the good life, becomes a stranger. The more you proceed in that direction, the more this direction, where the Divine Beloved dwells, turns away from you. The more you make peace with the worldly man, the more the Divine Beloved is estranged from you to your detriment. Maulana

Rumi says,"the names "Princehood', ***Miri,*** Vizierate, ***Vaziri,*** and 'kingship', ***Shahi,*** are enticing, but hidden beneath them is death and pain giving up the ghost. Be a slave of God and walk on the earth like a horse under the rider, and not like a bier which is carried on the necks of the bearers".(17)

Therefore, the man of God should stay away from the kings and princes as far as possible and practical.(18)

THE SOUL AND SPIRIT

Rumi says, "The soul is one thing, and the spirit is another. Do you not see how in sleep the soul fares abroad? The spirit remains in the body, but the soul wanders and is transformed. When Ali said, 'He who knows his own self knows his Lord', he was speaking of this soul."

He further explains that, for instance, if you take a little mirror in your hand and the object shows clearly in the mirror, whether it shows large or small, it is still that object. Mere words cannot ensure understanding; words only reveal the inward impulse of the listeners. Outside the spiritual world there is another world which men seek. This world and its delights cater to the animal instincts of man. When animal instincts of man are fed the man goes into decline. After all, "Man is a rational animal". So man consists of two things, namely,

1) that which feeds his animality in this material world : are lusts and desires;

2) that which is his true essence, the food for it is : knowledge, wisdom and the sight of God.

Therefore, two elements are warring within this one entity, that is, man. The animality in man flees away from God, whilst his humanity flees away from this world. Who shall succeed? Abstinence from animality coupled with acquisition of knowledge, wisdom and the sight of God will eventually succeed.(19)

DIVINE GRACE

Rumi explains to his disciples that the superiority of **Abu Bakr** over the other companions of the Prophet was owing not to much praying and fasting or alms-giving, but because God's special favour was with him, namely, **the love of God.**

He exhorts his disciples thus : "When therefore you perceive love to be in you, augment it that it may become greater. When you perceive the principal sum to be in you, namely the quest of God, increase it by ever questing, for 'In movement is blessing'; if you do not increase it, your principal will go away from you."

God bestows His grace and special mark of honour on those who ceaselessly struggle in their quest; for grace does not dispense with the necessity of effort. Suffering too is a Divine grace, in that, it reminds men of the existence and power of God.(20)

LOVE AND SERVICE

Some have said that love is the cause of service. Rumi explains that this is not so. According to him it is the inclination of the beloved that is the requisite of service. If the beloved desires that the lover should be occupied with service, then service proceeds from the lover; if the beloved does not desire it, then the lover abandons service. The abandonment of service is not contrary to love; after all, even if the lover does not service, love does service in him. No; on the contrary, the root of the matter is love, and service is the branch of love. So it is in the relationship between man and God. God joined the soul with the body, which may be compared with a beehive, in order to display His Omnipotence. Physical death was designed by God only to strike fear into men's hearts.(21)

HOPE AND FEAR

Rumi says that faith itself consists of hope and fear. On some one asking him, "Hope itself is goodly, so what is this fear"? He replied, "show me a fear that is without hope, or a hope without fear. Since the twain are never apart, how can you ask such a question?" He then explained, a man has sown wheat; he naturally hopes that wheat will come up, whilst at the same time he is afraid lest some impediment or blight may intervene. Hence it is realized that there is no such thing as hope without fear, nor can one ever conceive of feat without hope or hope without fear.(22)

SEEKING OF GOD

Rumi says that all things in this world, wealth, wife and raiment, are sought after for something other, they are not sought for themselves. "Do you not see that even if you had a hundred thousand dirhams and were hungry and could not find any bread, you would not be able to eat and feed yourself on those dirhams? A wife is for the sake of children, and to satisfy the passion. Clothes are to ward off the cold. In like manner all things are concatenated with God Most Glorious : He is sought and desired for His own sake, not for any other thing. For inasmuch as He is beyond all and better than all and nobler than all and subtler than all, how should He be desired for less than Himself? So 'unto Him is the final end'; when they have reached him, they have reached their entire goal, beyond there is no transcending."(23)

INFLUENCE OF SAINTS

Rumi speaks of the powerful influence of the society of true believers and saints. The saint, who is accorded a special vision, controls his fellow-men though they be unaware of the fact. Men should not be wholly occupied with mundane affairs. He further explains that all earthly pleasures and joys derive from secondary causes; the mystics, therefore, do not cling to them. He also says that the best words are those which are few and telling and convey a lesson. He cites an example that a certain sheikh from India was seeking to come to a great saint. When he reached Tabriz and came to the door of the saint's cell, a voice came to him from within the cell, saying, 'Return ! In your case the benefit is that you have come to the door. If you see the saint, that will harm you'. The sheikh from India went away.

Rumi says, "A few words which convey a lesson are like a lit lamp which kissed an unlit lamp and departed. That is enough for him, and he has attained his purpose."(24)

A few words are sometimes more effective than long speeches.

MYSTIC'S INDIFFERENCE TO HONOURING

Every man who puts up sacred edifices on the graves of saints or mystics, he does so with a particular intention : either to display his generosity, or for the sake of fame, or to gain a reward in heaven. It is God Most High who, according to Rumi, is the true object in exalting the rank of the mystics or saints and honouring their tombs and graves. In fact, they themselves require not to be honoured, for they are honoured in themselves. He gives an excellent analogy and says, "If a lamp desires to be placed on high, it desires that for the sake of others, not for its own sake. What matters it to a lamp, whether it is below or above? It is still a lamp shedding light. But it desires that its light should reach others. The sun which is in the height of heaven - if it were below it would still be the same sun, only the world would remain in darkness. So the sun is on high not for its own sake but for that of others. It follows then that the saints are exalted above indifferent to such things as 'above' and 'below' and the reverence of men."

The glorying of saints or mystics is in God; and God is independent of 'below' and 'above'. This 'below' and 'above' belongs only to us lesser mortals.(25)

SILENCE - AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

Sometimes silence can be more effective than any speech or action. Rumi cites an example and says -

"When Usman, God be pleased with him, became caliph he went into the pulpit. The people waited to see what he would say. He kept silent and said nothing; he looked steadily at the people, and caused a state of ecstasy to descend upon the people so that they had no power to go out, and knew not where one another were sitting. Not by a hundred preachings and sermons and predication would have such an excellent state been brought about in them; precious lessons were imparted to them and secrets were revealed, that could not have been communicated by so much labour and preaching. To the end of the assembly he continued to look at them thus, saying not one word. When he desired to descend from the pulpit, he said, 'It is better for you to have a working Imam than a speaking Imam."

What Caliph Usman said was the truth. If the purpose of speaking is to communicate instruction delicately and to effect a change of character, that had been accomplished without words many times better than might have been achieved by words. With regards to his description of himself as a 'Working' Imam, without uttering a word. Caliph Usman was able to perform the true 'work', the work which was of the soul.

This way he was able to reach out to the entire assembly and proved that silence, sometimes, is an effective communicator."(26)

FRIENDSHIP AND ENMITY

According to Rumi, the world of enmity is narrow in relation to the world of friendship, for men flee away from the world of enmity in order to reach the world of friendship. The world of friendship is also narrow in relation to that world out of which friendship and enmity come into existence. He says, "Friendship and enmity, unbelief and faith - these are all a cause of duality. For unbelief is denial, and the denier requires someone for him to deny; so too the confessor requires someone for him to confess. Hence, it is realized, concord and discord are a cause of duality; and that world transcends unbelief and faith, friendship and enmity. Since friendship is a cause of duality, and a world exists where there is no daulity but only pure unity, when a man has reached that world he has come forth out of friendship and enmity."

Mansur al-Hallaj's friendship with God reached its utmost goal, when he said ***"Anal haqq",*** that is, 1 have passed away, God alone has remained'. This is extreme humility and the utmost limit of servanthood, for it means He only is'. This is a state where there is no duality only pure unity.(27)

HUMILITY

Humility is a great characteristic in a man of substance. Just as a branch of a fruit bearing tree is loaded with fruit, that fruit draws it down; whereas the branch which has no fruit raises its head on high, like the white poplar.

Rumi says, ***"The Prophet,*** God bless him and give him peace, was extremely humble. All the fruits of this world and the next were gathered upon him, so of course he was humbler than all men." He continues, "No man ever preceded the ***Messanger of God*** in making a greeting. No man was able to precede the Prophet in offering greetings because the Prophet would outstrip him out of extreme humility and so would greet him first."

Humility frees a man from pride and arrogance and shows him the way to the ultimate reality.(28)

FAQR

By ***Faqr*** the Sufis mean the disdain for the rewards which this world, or the next, has to offer and which the majority of mankind covet. ***Faqr*** indicates that attitude of mind which enables a man to strive, spurning all delights and all rewards except the attainment of worthy ends. The term is commonly used to denote 'poverty' or 'indigence'. According to Maulana Rumi, the term means an attitude of complete detachment and superiority to one's material possessions. That is why Sufis maintain that: "One moment of ***Faqr*** is better than a thousand years spent in the worship of God."(29)

SUBSTANCE OF MAN

Rumi compares the substance of man to a fluttering flag. The man sets the flag fluttering in the air and then at the foot of that flag all elements gather, such as, reason, understanding, fury and anger, forbearance and liberality, fear and hope, states wiithout end and qualities unbounded. He says, "Who ever looks from afar sees only the flag, but he who beholds from close at hand can only perceive what essences and realities reside in it and then knows the substance of that man." He counsels that close observation of a man's drawbacks and qualities is a must to know the substance of that man.(30)

GOOD AND EVIL

To a question : "Is the agent of good and evil one thing or two things"?

Rumi replies : "From the point of view that in the time of hesitation they are in dispute one with the other, is categorically two; for one person cannot be opposed to himself. From the point of view that evil is inseparable from good for good is the abandonment of evil, and the abandonment of evil is impossible without evil : that good is the abandonment of evil is proved by the fact that, were it not for the incitement of evil, there would be no abandonment of good from this point of view they are not two. The Magians said that Yazdan is the creator of good things and Ahriman is the creator of evil and hateful things. To this we reply that desirable things are not apart from hateful things. The desirable cannot exist without the hateful, since the desirable is the cessationof the hateful, and the cessation of the hateful without the hateful impossible. Joy is the cessation of sorrow; the cessation of sorrow without sorrow is impossible. So they are one and indivisible."(31)

In another discourse Rumi asserts : "So all things, though appearing opposite in relation to their opposites, in relations to the wise man are all performing the same work and are not opposed.

Show me the evil thing in this world wherein no good is contained and good thing wherein no evil is contained. For instance, a man was intent on murder, then busied himself with fornication, so that he shed no blood. Inasmuch as it is fornication, it is evil; but inasmuch as it prevented murder, it is good. So evil and good are one and indivisible."(32)

HEALTH AND WEALTH

According to Rumi, between a man and God there are just two veils, and all other veils manifest out of these : they are health, and wealth. The man who is well of body says, "Where is God? I do not see." As soon as pain afflicts him he begins to say, "O God ; O God:" communing and conversing with God. So, in this case, health was the veil, and God was hidden under that pain. As much as a man has wealth and resources, he procures the means to gratifying his desires, and is preoccupied night and day with that. The moment indigence appears, his spirit is weakened and he goes round about God.(33)

DISCIPLINE

Enduring the ridiculous is a great discipline. The mystics do not shirk discipline. In their quest, the first discipline is to slay the self and to eschew all desires and lusts. That is the 'greater struggle". Maulana Rumi says, "When they achieved and arrived and abode in the station of security, wrong and right became revealed to them. They know and see right from wrong. Still they are engaged in a great discipline; for these mortals do all things wrongly, and they see this and endure it. For if they do not do so, and speak out and declare those mortals to be wrong, not one person will stay before them or give them the Muslim salute. But God Most High has bestowed on them a great and mighty power and capacity to endure : out of a hundred wrongnesses they mention one, so that it will not come difficult to the man. His other wrongnesses they conceal; indeed they praise him, saying. The wrong of yours is right,' so that by degrees they may expel from him these wrongnesses, one by one."

Citing the example of a teacher, he explains that "A teacher is teaching a child how to write. When he comes to writing a whole line, the child writes a line and shows it to the teacher. In the teacher's eyes that is all wrong and bad. The teacher speaks to the child kindly and cajolingly : That is all very good, and you have written well. Bravo, bravo! Only this letter you have written badly, this is how it ought to be. That letter too you have written badly.' The teacher calls bad a few letters out of that line, and shows the child how they ought to be written; the rest he praises, so that the child may not lose heart. The child's weakness gathers strength from that approval, and so gradually he is taught and assisted on his way."

It is by such parables Rumi drove home the points he wanted to make to his disciples.(34)

INWARD LIGHT

One must labour to acquire inwad light. When a man has acquired such an inward light, all mundane circumtances appertaining to this world such as rank, command, vizierate, shining upon his inward heart pass like a lightening- flash; just as with worldlings the circumtances of the unseen world, such as the fear of God, and yearning for the worlds of the saints, shine upon their hearts and pass like a lighteningflash. The people of God, says Maulana Rumi, have become wholly God's and their faces are turned on God; they are preoccupied with and absorbed in God. Worldly passions sometimes show briefly but do not take root and pass away from the people of God.(35)

VARIOUS WAYS — ONE GOAL

Rumi says, "I was speaking one day amongst a group of people, and a party of non-Muslims was present. In the middle of my address they began to weep and to register emotion and ecstasy." Someone asked, what did they know : What did they understand, that they should weep? Rumi answered : "It is not necessary that they should understand the inner spirit of these words. The root of the matter is the words themselves, and that they do understand. After all, every one acknowledges the Oneness of God, that he is the Creator and Provider that He controls every thing, that to Him all things shall return, and that it is He who punishes and forgives. When anyone hears these words which are a description and commemoration of God, a universal commotion and ecstatic passion supervenes, since out of these words comes the scent of their Beloved and their Quest."

Rumi further explains though the ways are various, the goal is one. Giving analogy of Ka'aba, he says there are many roads leading to Ka'aba which people can follow. The hearts of all are at one upon the Ka'aba. The hearts have one attachment, and ardour and a great love for the Ka'aba, and in that is no room for contrarity. Once they have arrived at the Ka'aba, it is realized that any confusion whatsoever was concerning the roads only, and that their goal was one.

Similarly, all men who in their inmost hearts love God and seek Him, pray to Him and put their hope in Him can follow any road (faith) to reach him.

Ways are various, but the goal is one.(36)

ETERNAL DECREE

On an enquiry by someone whether the eternal decrees and that which God has predestined - do they change at all? Rumi answered : "What God has decreed in eternity - that there shall be good for good and evil for evil - that decree will never change. All saints and prophets have said that recompense of good is good, and recompense of evil evil.

And whoso has done an atom's weight of good
shall see it;
And whoso has done an atom's weight of evil
shall see it.

The eternal decree does not change; it changes only to the extent, that is to say, the more good you do the greater good you will receive, and likewise the more wrong you do the greater evil you will see."(37)

HAPPINESS IN MIND

Happiness consists if you are happy in mind. Rumi says, "Mind of a man is like a snare, a trap, which must be properly set to catch the prey. If your mind is unhappy, the snare is torn and becomes useless. It therefore behoves one not to go to excess in one's love or hatred towards other men, since by both of these the snare becomes torn. One must be moderate."(38).

However, in the case of one's love appertaining to the Creator greater the love, the better. The love for the Creator is latent in all the world and in all the men. How indeed should any man not love Him who gave him being? Love is latent in every man, but impediments veil that love; when those impediments are removed that love becomes manifest.

SCHOLARSHIP

Rumi says, that a man does not become a scholar by virtue of robe and turban; scholarship is a virtue in his very essence, and whether that virtue be clothed in tunic or overcoat, it makes no difference.(39)

UNIVERSAL INTELLECT AND PARTIAL INTELLECT

Rumi says, "The fact that men compose books and set up new skills and buildings is no new composition. They have seen the likeness of that, and merely make additions to it. Those who invent something new on their own account, they are the **Universal Intellect.** The **partial intellect** is capable of learning, and is in need of teaching; the Universal Intellect is the teacher, and is not in need. So, when you investigate all trades, the root and origin of them was revelation; men have learned them from the prophets, and they are the Universal Intellect. There is the story of the raven; when Cain slew Abel and did not know what to do, the raven slew a raven and dug the earth and buried that raven and scattered dust on its head. Cain learned from the raven how to make a grave and how to bury. So it is with all the professions. Every one who possesses a partial intellect is in need of teaching, and the **Universal Intellect** is the founder of every thing. It is the prophets and saints who have effected union between partial intellect and Universal Intellect so that they have become one."(40)

SPIRITUAL STATES OF MAN

According to Rumi, Man has three spiritual states. In the first he pays no heed to God at all, but worships and pays service to everything, woman and man, wealth and children, stones and clods; God he does not worship. When he acquires a little knowledge and awareness, then he serves nothing but God. Again, when he progresses further in this state he becomes silent; he does not say, '1 do not serve God', neither does he say, 'I serve God', for he has transcended these two degrees. No sound from these people issues into the world."(41)

THE WRATH OF GOD

In one of his discourses, Rumi explains, "Jesus, upon whom be peace, was asked, 'Spirit of God, what is the greatest and most difficult thing in this world and the next?' He replied, 'The wrath of God.' They asked, 'And what shall save a man from that?' He answered. That you master your own wrath and supress your rage.'

That is the proper way; that when the soul desires to complain a man should go contrary to it and give thanks and exaggerate the matter to such a degree that he acquires within himself a love of the other. For to give thanks lyingly is to seek love of God.(42)

THE VILENESS OF MAN

Says Rumi, "This that men say, that in the human soul there is an evil which does not exist in animals and wild beasts - it is not from the standpoint that man is worse than they; it is explained by the fact that evil character and wickedness of soul and the vilenesses which are in man are according to a secret essential element which is in him. Those characteristics and vilenesses and evil are a veil over that element. The more precious and venerable and noble that element is, the greater are its veils. So vileness and evil and bad character are the cause of the veil over that element; and these veils cannot be removed save with great strivings.

Those strivings are of various kinds. The greater of them is to mingle with friends who have turned their faces to God and turned their backs on this world. For there is no more difficult striving than this, to sit with righteous friends; for the very sight of them dissolves and naughts that carnal soul.(43)

NOTES AND REFERENCES :

1. Discourse - 2. This is also mentioned in the ***Mesnaui,*** VI, 3140.
2. Discourse - 5.
3. Discourse -3. This is also mentioned in the ***Mesnavi,*** VI, 4630ff.
4. Discourse - 4.
5. Discourse - 7.
6. Discourse - 17.
7. Translation of the couplet by A. J. Arbeny in ***Discourses of Rumi,*** p. 90.
8. Discourse - 2. The element of congeneity is also frequently referred to in the ***Mesnavi.*** Special reference may be made to the ***Mesnavi,*** IV, 2671.
9. Discourses - 3 and ***8***.
10. Discourse - ***6***.
11. Discourse - 2.
12. Discourse - 11.
13. Discourse - 12.
14. Discourse - 2.
15. Discourse - 15.
16. Discourse - 16.
17. ***Mesnavi*** translated by R. A. Nicholson, Book VI, pp. 323-324.
18. Discourse - 2.
19. Discourse - 12.
20. Discourse - 60.
21. Discourse - 62.
22. Discourse - 16.
23. Discourse - 23.
24. Discourse - 63.
25. Discourse - 24.

26. Discourse - 31.
27. Discourse - 52.
28. Discourse - 25.
29., Quoted by Syedur Rahmnan in ***An Introduction to Islamic Philosophy,*** p. 327.
30. Discourse - 31.
31. Discourse - 30.
32. Discourse - 59.
33. Discourse - 69.
34. Discourses - 14 and 31.
35. Discourse - 20.
36. Discourse - 23.
37. Discourse - 23.
38. Discourse - 56.
39. Discourse - 19.
40. Discourse - 38.
41. Discourse - 53.
42. Discourse - **68**.
43. Discourse - 70.

CHAPTER - VI

PHILOSOPHY OF RUMI

The word Philosophy is of Greek origin which means love of wisdom' and 'pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.' Philosophy then is an enquiry into the nature of life of existence. We have two ways of dealing with reality. One starts and ends with revelation and tradition; we call it religion. The second depends on the free exercise of reason and thought and is called philosophy.

Philosophical enquiry from the earliest times has adopted one of two alternate ways of approaching its problems. One is through the world of man's inner being and the other through the world external to him. The characteristic of Maulana Rumi's thought is that it has paid greater attention to the inner world, that is, intuition. It starts from the realization of his inner world and reaches out to the world of phenomena.

This also formed part of the basic tenets of *Tasawwuf* (Theosophy), or Sufism, or Islamic mysticism, which had taken hold of the Muslim mind by the end of the twelfth century and almost every school of thought became imbued with it, and what had looked at askance in the beginning ended in becoming part of the orthodoxy.

1

Sufism had produced many men of conspicuous sincerity, holiness and intuition from the eighth to the eleventh centuries; but it never made a greater impact than when Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, the *Hujjat al-Islam* ("Proof of Islam"), declared himself its champion. Bom in 1058 at Tus in Khurasan, al-Ghazali lived his early years in this north Iran province which had raised up so many mystical geniuses. "His schooling was that of an orthodox theologian and lawyer, and he had established himself as the leading Sunni scholar of his day when he was appointed professor of divinity at the Nizamiya Madrassa, Baghdad, in 1091 A.D. He died in 1111 A.D."(1)

Al-Ghazali lived the simple life of a mystic, punctuated only by study and the composition of a succession of books. In the books he brought out various aspects of the moral, metaphysical and mystical system in which he essayed to reconcile Sufism with Muslim orthodoxy, and to prove that the Muslim life of devotion to the One God could not be lived perfectly save by following the Sufi way. "While none of his shorter works is negligible, and some of special value and importance, his masterpiece, and in many ways the greatest religious book composed by a Muslim, is the massive ***Ihya 'Ulum-at-Din (Revival of Religious Sciences)."****(2)*

The story of al-Ghazali's conversion to Sufism is a classic of its kind. In a very interesting passage, al-Ghazali tells us how from his youth upward he was possessed with an intense thirst for knowledge, which impelled him to study every form of religion and philosophy. But when he tried to distinguish true from the false he found no sure test. He became a sceptic. At last he turned to Sufism. A mystical experience cured him of his malady and caused him to devote all his powers to searching after truth. His study of philosophy and scholastic theology convinced him that no light was to be found there. Then he turned his attention to the Sufistic Way revealed in the writings of ***al- Muhasibi*** and other old masters. As he read these it became clear to him that now he was on the right path. He realized that the higher stages of Sufism could not be learned by study but had to be realized by experience, that is, ecstasy and moral transformation. It is said that he experienced ecstasy and complete inward transformation. It was al-Ghazali's personal experience of this truth that inspired the great religious revival which his example more than his works brought about.

Al-Ghazali succeeded in assuring the mystical, or intuitional attitude, a place within official Islam side by side with the legalism of the lawyers and the intellectualism of the theologians. By virtue of his profound learning al Ghazali commanded the respect of all except the narrowest of the orthodox. "His legal and theological training qualified him to bring to his constructive work on Sufism an intellect acute and sensitive, a mind ingenious and inventive."(3)

Al-Ghazali's search for religious truth, erudition and constructive work on Sufism exercised a profound and momentous influence upon the future history of Muslim thought.

Al-Ghazali's influence was pervasive and permanent. Among Sufis some of the great founders of the Orders acknowledged him their leader. ***Abdul Qadir Jilani*** (1078-1166 A.D.), the inspirer of the Qadariya Order, ***Moinuddin Chishti Sanjari*** (1141-1236 A.D.), founder of the Chishtiya Order, and ***Shihabuddin Suhrawardy*** (1144-1234 A.D.) of the Suhrawardiya followed al-Ghazali's teachings. Even ***Muhiyuddin Ibn al-Arabi*** (1165-1240) the mystic philosopher, came under the pervasive influence of al-Ghazali.

II

In philosophic development Al-Ghazali was followed by ***Muhiyuddin Ibn- al- Arabi*** (1164-1240 A.D.) who elaborated on the doctrine of unityism and is hailed as the mystic philosopher ***par-excetlence.*** With him mystic philosophy attained its zenith.

Muhiyuddin Ibn al-Arabi was bom in Murcia, Spain (Europe) in 1164. At the age of eight he went to Lisbon for studies. Here he received his early education from ***Sheikh Abu Bakr.*** He then moved to Seville where he studied Islamic Law, Tradition and Theology. While in Seville he travelled a lot and, among other places, went to Cordova where he met ***Averroes (Ibn-i-Rushd).***

Ibn al-Arabi started for the East at the age of thirty-eight. Wherever he went he was received with great honour and given handsome endowments which he always gave away to the poor. He was initiated into Sufism at Tunis (Africa). He finally reached Damascus (Asia) where he settled down and died in 1240

A.D. His tomb below Mount Gasiyun is regarded to be 'a piece of the garden of paradise' and also called 'the Philosopher's Stone'. He was a voluminous author and is said to have written more than four hundred books. Two of these works are specially celebrated which won for him the title of ***Sheikh al-Akbar*** (the Grand Master). These books are ***Fatuhat al-Mecca*** (Meccan Revelations) and ***Fosus al-Hikam*** (Bezels of Philosophy) which are of great philosophical importance for their originality of thought and far reaching implications.

Before Ibn al-Arabi, Sufism was an ascetic movement; he turned this movement into a speculative system full of comprehensive philosophical ideas. He gave a new doctrine named ***Wahadat-al-Wafud,*** the ***Unity of Existence.***

To understand the Unity of Existence as expounded by Ibn al-Arabi we should know his metaphysical theory of Reality. The Absolute Being, or the Universal Being, is the Reality which is the ultimate ground of all that exists. According to him all Being is One and an Absolute Unity. Individual Beings past, present and future - are essentially One Being, a Universal Substance, Primary Matter or God. The being of God is the source and cause of all that has being and the finite beings are the modes of manifestation of this Universal Substance. Ibn al Arabi says, "Were it not for the permeation of God by means of His form, in all existents the world would have no existence, just as, were it not for the intelligible universal realities no predications of external objects would be possible".

Ibn al-Arabi's system, vast and widely ranging as it is, embraces the speculation and terminologies of all his widely various sources. It is not possible to describe it all in a few paragraphs. However, the following note may give some indication as to how he has assimilated the sayings of his predecessors and as to how his own philosophic themes have influenced his successors.

God is Absolute Being, and is the sole source of all existence; in Him alone Being and Existence are one and inseparable. The Universe posseses Relative Being, either actual or potential. God is both Transcendent and Immanent - Transcendence and Immanence being two fundamental aspects of Reality as man knows it. This Reality man views from two different angles. As the essence of all phenomena man calls it ***Haqq (the Real)*** and as the manifestation of that essence in phenomena, man calls it ***Khalq*** (the phenomenal or Creation). ***Haqq*** and ***Khalq,*** reality and appearance, the ***One*** and ***Many,*** are only names of two subjective aspects of one ***Reality.*** Before coming into existence, things of the phenomenal world were latent in the Mind of God, and were thus one with the Divine Essence and Consciousness. There is no such thing as Union with God in the sense of becoming one with God, but there is realization of the already existing fact that the mystic is one with God. There is no such thing as knowing' God in the sense of anything that the mind can conceive. The only tentative description of it is that it is ***Universal*** or ***Omnipresent*** and is ***Omniscent*** and ***Omnipotent.*** Though it is everywhere, it cannot be seen because it is not an object. It is the origin of the whole universe and everything is sustained by it and all things return to it in the end. The creative and rational principle of the Universe, or the ***First Intellect,*** is the ***Reality (Idea)*** of ***Muhammed,*** also called the ***Reality of Realities;*** this principle finds fullest manifestation in the ***Perfect Man (Insan al kamil).*** Each prophet is a Logos of God; the Logos is Muhammad, the "head of the heirarchy of prophets. All these individual Logoi are united in the reality of Muhammad". The Perfect Man is a miniature of Reality; he is the microcosm in whom are reflected all the perfect attributes of the macrocosm. The Perfect Man was the cause of the Universe, being the manifestation of God's desire to be known; for the Perfect Man knows God, loves God, and is loved by God. For Man alone the world was made. Man occupies a supreme position on account of his unique and unparalleled nature.

Ibn al-Arabi says, "No one knows the dignity of man and his place in the universe except those who know how to contemplate God perfectly. He is the only creature in whose power lies the possibility of knowing God absolutely". The dignity of man therefore cannot be over-rated. He is the highest and most venerable creature God ever created.

According to Ibn al-Arabi the basis of all worship is the love of the object worshipped, but love is a universal principle which pervades all beings and binds them together. Therefore, the highest and the truest worship, the highest manifestation in which God is worshipped, is love. Ibn al-Arabi's philosophic system is one of the most imposing structures built by a Muslim philosopher. He was assailed for heterodoxy and condemned by some, but others regarded him as one of the greatest scholars **(al-Sheikh-al-Akbar)** and a God-drunken saint.

About Ibn al-Arabi Arberry says, "He gathered into the comprehensive range of his meditation the entire learning of Islam, and was perfectly familiar not only with the writings and teachings of the orthodox Sunni theologians, lawyers and philosophers, and of the Sufis from the earliest times to his own day, but also with the schismatics and heretical movements like the Mutazilites, Carmathians and Isma'-ilis. His system, vast and widely ranging as it is, embraces the speculations and terminologies of all his widely various sources; so that the problem of abstruse reference is complicated by the further constant difficulty of an inconsistent technical vocabulary".(5)

Ibn al-Arabi marks a turning-point in the history of speculative Sufism. Though he was violently attacked for his pantheistic teachings and for his extravagant claims, no Sufi who came after him was free of his influence, and he has left his mark on all subsequent Sufistic literature. Some of the doctrines of **Ibn Al-Arabi,** particularly concerning **Perfect Man** or **Ideal**

Man, Logos, and **Unity of Existence** were further developed first by **Jalaluddin Rumi** (1207- 1273 A.D.) and subsequently by **Abdul Karim Jili** (1365-1417 A.D.).

III

It is said that all philosophical systems have their origin in some perplexing problems. When a great intellect encounters a difficult problem and tries to find its solution, the thoughts engendered in these attempts when elaborated form a philosophical system. What was the problem that set **Jalaluddin Rumi** athinking?

When ***Jalaluddin Rumi*** appeared on the scene the political scenario at that time was extremely dismal. Muslim world, on the whole, was in a state of total turmoil. It was an epoch of indescribable carnage and devastation in the wake of Mongol invasions. Wherever the Mongols went misery and desolation followed. People turned to those who offered an ideal representation of things more prized, such as, order, security, justice, beneficience and the social virtues, which was provided by the Sufis' vision of everlasting peace and joy to be attained by those who would contemplate within themselves; and seek counsel and psychological support of the divines. In this connection the role played by Maulana Rumi was exemplary. His aim was not only to convey the transcendental truth but also to create a beautiful world in the minds of men capable of suggesting the infinite and inexpressible, of attuning the soul to heavenly harmonies and preparing it for the highest mystical experience.

Added to this the religious and philosophical thought in the

Muslim world was nearing extinction. Both ***Ibn-i-Rushd*** (Averroes) and ***Al-Ghazali*** were his immediate predecessors. He was also a junior contemporary of ***Muhiyuddin Ibn al-Arabi, Sanai*** and ***Fariduddin Attar.*** He had thus inherited the legacy of the highest philosophical, religious and mystical knowledge ever attained in Islam. Muslim thought was influenced on the one hand by Greek Philosophy and the religious life of Christian missionaries and, on the other, by Iranian and Indian, both Hindu and Buddhist, ideas. ***Jalaluddin Rumi*** left no problem of philosophy and religion untouched; he tried to interpret the ideas of his predecessors in the light of his personal knowledge and experience. Therefore the study of Jalaluddin Rumi is the study of the best achievements of Islam in philosophical and religious thought.

It can be appropriately summed up that from al-Ghazali we get the sense and doctrine, from Ibn al-Arabi speculation and philosophical system and from Jalaluddin Rumi the sentiment, faith and experience and personal religion : ***Al-Ghazali, Ibn al-Arabi*** and ***Jalaluddin Rumi*** formed the illustrious trinity of Sufism.

IV

It is indeed a huge task to discuss all the problems dealt by Rumi. The most important and the central theme of his philosophy is the problem of Personality, Divine and Human, and their inter relationship. This again sub-divides into philosophical problems, such as, the Nature of Soul, Creation, Evoloution, Mysticism, Love, Freedom, Perfect Man, Survival of Personality, God and His relation to this world. I shall now give an outline of his thoughts on these and various other subjects.

GOD - AN ABSOLUTE UNITY

The philosophy of Maulana Rumi, like the philosophy of all Sufis, begins from the conception that not only ***True Being,*** but ***Beauty*** and ***Goodness*** belong exclusively to ***God,*** though they are manifested in a thousand mirrors in the phenomenal world. Based on the observations of Ibn al-Arabi he has further developed that God was when there was nothing beside Him. ***God*** is ***Pure Being*** and what is other than God only exists in so far as His Being is infused into it, or mirrored in it. He is also ***Absolute Beauty,*** the ***Real Beloved,*** the ***Eternal Being,*** the ***Absolute Being*** or the ***Universal Being.***

According to him all being is ***One*** and an ***Absolute Unity.*** Individual beings - past, present and future - are essentially One Being, a Universal Substance, or Primary Matter or God. The being of God is the source and cause of all that has being and the finite beings are the modes of manifestation of this Universal Substance. So Reality which is an absolute Being is one with Absolute Existence. The Real source of all beings is what he calls ***Absolute Being*** in the sense of ***Reality*** or a ***Being*** whose existence is identical with its essence. This essence is at once the realized and the realizable quiddities in the external world with all their properties; and upon this essence, its existence and manifestations, the human mind bases its notion of abstract existence.

Owing to our finite minds and our inability to grasp the whole as a ***whole,*** we regard it as a plurality of beings, ascribing to each one characteristics which distinguish it from the rest. Only a person possessing the vision of a mystic can transcend, in a supermental state of intuition, all the multiplicity of forms and see the reality that underlines them. In itself the One is simple and indivisible, but predications multiply it. When we predicate of external things the categories of colour, size, shape and temporal or spatial relations, the ***One*** appears as ***Many.***

God is both ***immanent*** and ***transcendent.*** He is immanent in all beings. He is transcendent because He is above all limitations and individualization. His manifestation in limited or finite forms, or in phenomena, constitutes His immanence, but His being Himself above such limitation constitutes His transcendence. He is the ***Unity*** behind the multiplicity and ***Reality*** behind the appearance.

This transcendent aspect of God cannot be apprehended by the intellect.

The Sufis, or Saints, in their ecstatic flight, get a glimpse of this unity not through the ***intellect,*** but by means of super-mental ***intuition*** which belongs only to that state. There is no duality of subject and object, the knower and the known. God is indefinable and indescribable. However much Maulana Rumi tried to explain he admitted God cannot be conceived. "It is the One conception and Unity of God; and He is indescribable." He further says—

True Reality

Of this there is no academic proof in the world;
For it is hidden, and hidden, and hidden.(6)

Maulana Rumi's favourite metaphors, referring to the Absolute Being, are the Sea, Light, Love, Wine, Sun, Beauty and Truth.

Reference is also made here to the obsen^ation of the poet-philosopher ***Sir* Muhammad Iqbal who says -**

"In the interest of securing a complete vision of Reality, therefore, sense perception must be supplemented by the perception of what the Quran describes as 'Fuad', or 'Qalb', i-e heart:

'God hath made everything which He hath created most good; and began the creation of man with clay; then ordained his progeny from germs of life, from sorry water; then shaped him, and breathed of His spirit unto him and gave you hearing and seeing and ***heart;*** what little thanks do ye return?"

{XXXII : 6-8)

The 'heart' is a kind of inner intuition of insight which, in the beautiful words of Rumi, feeds on the rays of the sun and brings us into contact with aspects of Reality other than those open to sense perception. It is, according to the Quran, something which 'sees' and its reports, if properly interpreted, are never false. We must not, however, regard it as a mysterious special faculty; it is rather a mode of dealing with Reality in which sensation, in the physiological sense of the word, does not play any part. Yet the vista of experience thus opened to us is as real and concrete as any other experience".(7)

Rumi's doctrine of unity is : ***God alone really exists;*** there is nothing but God. The world of phenomenon and of the senses is a mere mirage - a reflection of ***Being*** on ***Not-Being,*** manifesting the attributes of ***Being*** as the reflection manifests its original, but not really participating in its nature. Here he gives the analogy of the Sun reflected in a pool of water. The reflection of the Sun may be blotted out instantly by a passing cloud, or marred by sudden gust of wind; the reflection is entirely dependent on the sun while the sun is absolutely independent of it.

According to Rumi, all paths lead to one straight path which leads to God. All religions and creeds with their differences are but one ***Universal Religion.*** The difference between polytheism and monotheism corresponds to the logical difference between the ***One*** and the ***Many.*** In polytheism what is worshipped is a form and an aspect or God. Actually there is nothing that is worshipped except God.

CREATION

. According to Rumi the universe is the product of God's activity of self- realization or self manifestation. The world before us has no independent existence. This world is only the back of the mirror, of which the face is the soul. The ***Universe*** is the ***body*** of which the ***soul*** is ***God.*** According to him, and all the Sufis, human souls, inspite of their individual differences, had generated from God and are one with God; and as such eternal. He further asserts that the transcendent self of man which is his real and lasting essence, is uncreated; and in so far as it is uncreated and real it is ***divine.*** How it separated from the primeval unity is not known. The essence of religious consciousness is the sense of indentity with the pain of separation from God who is the origin of the human soul. The soul is imprisoned in the human body and the human life is an attempt at self-realization which means return to the origin, that is God; life therefore is a journey back to God.

Rumi says, "When God wanted to manifest Himself He created a mirror whose face is the ***soul*** and whose back is the ***universe.*** My body is a product of my soul, not my soul a product of my body."

EMANATION OF SOUL

The entire process of manifestation can be described, in short, as follows : Before manifestation every name was in the knowledge of God and when manifested it became an individual thing. But before it was manifested, it had to pass through the world of spirit and the world of form. The spirit grew into form and the form developed into matter. When spirit displayed weight and cohesion, it became mineral; and when mineral displayed the faculty of growth, it became vegetable possessing the quality of absorption, assimilation, colouration etc. When vegetable displayed locomotion, it became animal, in which stage it showed anger and other qualities necessaiy for self-preservation. And when animal displayed understanding, it became man, possessing moral and spiritual qualities.

The central theme in Rumi's thought is the problem of development. He was out and out an evolutionary thinker. "He tried to reconcile the notion of creation with evolution. So he says allegorically that although man was created out of clay still his figure was not formed all at once, because God acts through gradual development."(8)

Thus there are three stages - ***spirit, form*** and ***matter.*** The world of form is a partition between the spheres of spirit and matter. Both are manifestations of one and the same essence. Man is thus the microcosm. The being of all things is God; there is nothing except Him. All things reveal an essential unity; every part of the world is the whole of it. So man is a unity, in essence, but multiplicity in individuality. To attain perfection man has to annihilate his self or realize that his self is nonexistent, while the self of God alone is existent.

Rumi wants to convince man that his real self, far from being a product of nature, is the source of all nature. In his transcendental aspect, man is already immortal, and by development, he can achieve personal immortality. From this the ***eternality*** and the ***transmigration*** of the soul are quite evident. Here the influence of Hindu Vedantic thought can be discerned.

LOVE

Love, according to Rumi, is the greatest force in human life. It is indescribable in any language, and any attempt to describe it merely makes it more baffling. He has used the term ***'Love'*** in a very wide sense, and the main feature of Love, as understood by him, is an intense desire on the part of the lover to assimilate the qualities and virtues of the beloved. According to him the force that drives the evolutionary process through universal struggle and contradiction is Love. All the processes of assimilation, growth and reproduction are manifestations of Love. Without Love there would have been no movement in the universe. It is ultimately the ***Love of the Origin*** in all being the ***First Beloved,*** the ***Eternal Beauty,*** that is the motive force in the process of evolution.

But what is this Love? No logical analysis of this ecstatic experience is possible. According to Maulana Rumi, Love is indescribable. Love presents a paradox in as much as in it by giving, we take, and by dying we live. With the help of this Love, the soul transcends through all barriers and sees the ***One Reality*** coming out in bold relief from every created object. Life and Love none can be defined because of their immediacy. Love is not ***logic;*** but it is ***music*** through which it can be partially expressed. Love being paradoxical in its nature music, its vehicle too, is paradoxical. "Love is the greatest ***mystery*** of life and music is the garb in which it symbolizes itself in the phenomenal realm."(9)

Rumi, distinguishing Intellect from Love, says : "Intellect is utilitarian, guided by the consideration of profit and loss; whereas Love is an end in itself and has no utilitarian motive. Perfect and eternal beauty belongs to God and all that is beautiful in the phenomenal world is only a passing reflection of God's eternal beauty and is related to Him as sunlight to the sun. So our love should not be confined to the beautiful *things* whose light is only transient and borrowed, but rise from the phenomenal to the noumenal origin of all beauty. Love is also the principle of unification and assimlation. It is the force of attraction in every atom by which one form of life merges into another and thereby causes growth. As a cosmological principle it is the origin of all life".(10)

It is generally argued that philosophy, with the help of reason, tries to discover the ***unity*** underlying the plurality of the phenomena of the world in which it can only partially succeed because reason can never overcome the limitation of ***subject*** and ***object.*** However, Rumi says : "There is a squint in the eye of the intellect : it sees double that which is really one; Intellect splits Reality into two and fails to unite it again. Hence Love is higher than reason, for it is the principle of unification. Reason differentiates and separates, while Love binds and assimilates the heterogeneous and makes it *homogeneous."*

Rumi's view of Love is very much akin to the notion of intuition developed by later European philosophers, such as, Fichte and Bergson, who maintain that it is through intuition that we can grasp the identity of the world that transcends all contradiction and relation. According to Rumi this intuition is ***Ishq*** (Love) - a longing for that kind of experience which unveils the nature of this intuition and also states why it cannot be communicated.

The Sufis always see a conflict between ***Love*** and ***Reason*** and maintain supremacy of love over law and reason. Hence they assert that Love is lawless and law is loveless. They identify ***Love*** with ***ecstasy*** in which all distinction of good and bad, right and wrong is lost. Regarding ***Ishq,*** Rumi says, "This cosmical feeling has not any particular form as its object." This ***Ishq*** removes all doubts raised by theoratical and practical reason and becomes the source of enlightenment inaccessible to reason. It was the identification of *Ishq* with cosmical intuition which led the Sufis to say - "He whom destiny places among the group of lovers becomes free from the mosque, and the temple. He whose aim of life is annihilation and *faqr,* has neither relation nor belief nor gnosis nor religion".(11)

Religion with all its forms and dogmas, is not the same as intuition. Intellect unaided by ***intuition (Ishq)*** cannot apprehend the divine and infinite nature of man. The essence of man is the Love of the Ideal and the Infinite. Intellect is realistic and deterministic, whereas intuition ***(Ishq)*** represents man as an ideal and free being; intuition ***(Ishq),*** therefore, is superior to intellect.

Intellect is desireable, but Love is more so. The former is necessary because it preserves the self and puts salutary checks on the stray ramblings of the heart, but Rumi does not regard it as absolutely necessary for human development. ***Love*** needs ***Intellect*** only to steer its course so as to keep it confined within the bounds of reality.

The theme of Love, according to Rumi, is paramount. This powerful emotion has been dealt with from every point of view. To him, Love is a force that provides a solution for all human difficulties. It is a bonding agent for all the separate elements of the Universe. The whole world would be a sepulchre, or a hoary or a gloomy place without the magic, life-giving touch of Love. His philosophy of life insists on ceaseless activity and insatiable yearning, and these are characteristics of his Love also.

Rumi also emphasizes the assimilating feature of Love. In fact this interpretation reinforces his hopes about the fortification of human personality. He argues that if by assimilation matter can progress to the state of manhood, there can be no obstacle in the way of evolution of man to the Infinite Being by his acquiring the qualities of God.

SURVIVAL OF PERSONALITY

The problem of the retention of individual personality after its union with Divine Personality is the crux of Sufism. The aim of the Sufis is to merge their souls in the Divine Being. God alone has a ***real*** being and all other things are ***contingent*** beings. God is everywhere and in everything. Man has a dual nature. His body is a non-being, but his soul is a being as it originates from the Divine Being. Through a process ***(Tariqat)*** of self-annihilation the Sufis want to extricate the soul from its connection with the body and be one with the source. The first step of this journey is called ***Fana*** (annihilation in God) and the goal is ***Baqa*** (permanent existence in God). By losing itself in God its individuality is not actually annihilated but transformed. The Sufis regard individuality as a mark of imperfection, and, at the same time, they try to retain individual personality. This situation is difficult to comprehend, yet they have done it. Maulana Rumi explains that the ***essence*** of the soul survives in God, but its attributes are annihilated. He further explains beautifully that life in death and survival in annihilation by the analogy of organism. He contends that just as matter when evolved into a living organism is dead as a matter, it lives and participates in the life of organism. Thus ***Fana*** (annihilation) is nothing but the moral transformation caused by the substitution of the ***lower*** by the ***higher*** self.

Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the poet-philosopher, also endorses these views. He says, "In the higher Sufism of Islam unitive experience is not the finite ego effacing its own identity by some sort of absorption into the infinite Ego; it is rather the Infinite passing into the loving embrace of the finite. As Rumi says:

Divine knowledge is lost in the knowledge of the saint;
And how is it possible for people to believe in such a thing?"(12)

Rumi is a firm believer in the development and survival of the ***human personality*** and holds that every being develops and expands by becoming part of a higher organism. So every individual should try to become an organ in the organism of God ***(Baqa).***

In the same way Rumi explains the Prophet's ascension ***(Miraj)*** : "According to him, the Prophet did not fly physically to heaven ; for man connot fly and God does not live in the heavens. The ascension is only spiritual. A man can ascend to heaven, to the realm of the Eternal, and the unmanifested by divesting himself of the attributes of his narrow individuality. Belief in physical ascension to heavens for meeting God is opposed to the idea of the Sufis". (13)

PERFECT MAN

Taking the cue from Ibn al-Arabi's concept of the Ideal Man who occupies a supreme position on account of his unique and unparalleled nature in the universe, Rumi wants to raise man to the position of vicegerency of God on earth. According to him, the ***Perfect Man*** is an ideal for the realization of which everything on earth is striving and towards which the whole process of evolution is moving. He is the final cause of creation.

The Sufis believe that there are two aspects in human nature, namely, the ***Nafs*** and the ***Ruh.*** The former stands for the animal self, the principle of evil; the latter stands for the rational self, the divine spark :

Nafs rà àn bà ke dar zindàn kuni
Har *che farmàyad khilafè àn kuni.*
(Keep your *Nafs* (animal self) under control,
If *Nafs* tries to lead you astray, do the opposite.)

The Sufis contend that the lower self in man can be annihilated by the realization of Truth and by moral purification. They also believe that the divine self can be realized in this very life and one who can do so becomes **the Perfect Man (Insan-al-kamil).**

The Sufis maintain that man in his essence is Divine for God breathed His spirit in him. The ***soul*** of man is the ***spirit*** of God. As the realization of the divine self is possible in this very life, on realization, man can become a source of infinite power and knowledge. The exaltation of the ***Prophet*** to a cosmic principle is closely connected with the conception of ***Perfect Man*** in Sufism. As God is the only being and there is no other being except Him, the Perfect Man is hardly separate from God.

Such notions about the supremacy of man were current in Sufism from the time of ***Bayazid (Abu Yazid) Bistami*** (died 875 A.D.) and ***Mansur al- Hallaj*** (died 922 A.D.). Maulana Rumi also subscribes to the same view that living in God man can know like God and work like God." To be a perfect man, one should know his self first. "He who knows his own self knows God". In order to acquire the knowledge of God, the essential condition for receiving this knowledge for a man is a pure and unsullied heart which becomes a mirror of Reality. The Sufis also introduced the notion of sainthood. The saints have all the attributes of a Perfect Man. ***Al-Ghazali*** says, "Knowledge is an ascending process. In the first stage it is based on the ***sense,*** but at a higher stage ***reason*** operates on it, and at a still higher stage knowledge is ultra-rationalistic." According to ***al-Ghazali,*** every man has the potentiality to attain this stage of higher development at which he becomes capable of even receiving revelation ***(Ilham).*** Rumi, like al-Ghazali, also holds that the Perfect Man is higher than the rational self and is capable of apprehending realities close to the categories of the intellect.

Rumi also maintains that the human heart is the stage of ***Divine Realities.*** Nothing comes to the soul from outside. Consistent with the belief in the infinite potentiality of the soul and its limitless possibility of development, revelation is only a part of that process of development of man. With Rumi, there is no fundamental difference between sainthood and prophethood and both represent a stage of development attainable by any man. So there is the possibility of the eternal recurrance of the Perfect Man.

FREEDOM OF WILL

Rumi believes in the freedom of will of man and says that man builds his own destiny. It is for this freedom that man is said to be the best of creation. Of all created beings man alone is given the freedom of choice. "There is neither reward nor punishment for the heavenly spheres moving under compulsion. The grace of God bestowed on man is in accordance with His word."

According to him there are two kinds of things : alterable and unalterable. Man's freedom consists in altering the alterable and not in altering the unalterable in relation to which he has no power.

The Laws of God are unalterable and man is predestined in relation to them; however, man has the option of choice between the possible and impossible. He says, "Injunctions and prohibitions, praise and blame, reward and punishment would be sheer mockery, if the doer of an action had not been free to choose. Struggling and striving does not mean striking one's head gainst fate, because it is the very fate of man to struggle. Struggling against destiny is the very destiny of man. In this very struggle his hidden, unrealized potentialities are actualized". Man has to constantly strive because it is the very fate of man to struggle.

Freedom of will is not an end in itself, the end of all freedom is free determination to live according to the higher self. Life starts with determination at the lower plane and develops the capacity of free choice in man in order to rise to the higher determinism again, where man makes a free offer of his freedom. This transformation in man is solely the work of love, according to Rumi.

PANTHEISM

Sufism is known as a pantheistic doctrine. It conceives God not as a transcendental Being sitting on His throne, but as an immanent Being, a cosmic force running through everything of this world. He is very much in the world. He has his seat more in the human heart than in the heaven. He is not an object of fear but of love. In fact all monistic philosophy is pantheistic. It appears that in the initial stage Sufism had developed more or less a transcendent view of God; but with the passage of time, it developed, first an immanent and, finally a panthestic view.

Ibn al-Arabi was the first Sufi who is known as a ***pantheist.*** He says, "Were it not for the permeation of God, by means of His form, in all existents the world would have no existence, just as, were it not for the intelligible universal realities no predications of external objects would be possible." This view was also subscribed to by Rumi.

It must be understood that Sufism is a phenomenon of intense religious consciousness, and as such more the product of emotion or intuition than of reason. This emotional experience which is ultra-rational experience when logically explained leads to pantheism. That is why Sufis are generally regarded as pantheists.

RATIONALISM

Rumi is not a rationalist. He does not believe in the knowability of being through theoratical reason. The categories of understanding are incapable of grasping the ***Ultimate Reality.***

Reason to him is only a guide but not the goal. As the essence of life, according to him, is non-intellectual so the ***Eternal Beauty*** that attracts is non-rational. The nature of God and human soul is ultra-rational. The central idea in Maulana Rumi's system is not the ***knowledge of God*** but ***life of man.*** He was attracted most by the process of growth and development of organism. Inorganic matter becomes organic by dying to itself and living a higher life. The whole course of evolution is an illustration of the principle of ***"dying to live".*** This transformation, or process of qualitative transformation, goes up till the individual soul becomes an active participant in the Infinite Life by becoming living organs in the life of life. Rumi says that ***Love*** is higher than reason, for it is the principle of unification. Reason differentiates and separates; whereas love binds and assimilates the heterogeneous and makes it homogeneous. Hence Love is much higher than reason.

ACHIEVEMENT OF IMMORTALITY

Concerning the achievement of immortality, Rumi, like other Sufis, has a strong belief in the survival of personality. He proclaimed that real immortality is association with God by getting rid of limited and conditioned individuality. According to him, the essence of the individual survives although his attributes may be merged in the divine attributes. The individual is only lost as the candle or the stars are lost in the morning in the overwhelming effulgence of the light of the sun.

To illustrate annihilation of the self by being clothed with divine attributes, Rumi used the analogy of red hot iron in fire. The iron takes the properties of fire without entirely losing its own individual essence. In that state it can claim to be fire as well as iron.

Even ***Sir Muhammad Iqbal,*** consistent with the conception of ***Immortality*** by Maulana Rumi, says, "It was only natural and perfectly consistent with the spirit of the Quran, that Rumi regarded the question of immortality as one of biological evolution, and not a problem to be decided by arguments of a purely metaphysical nature, as some philosophers of Islam had thought."(14)

Rumi's conception of immortality follows from his conception of the transcendental self and from his idealistic premises. According to him, "Man is afraid of death because he considers himself to be a part of a phenomenal Nature in which things arise, grow and decay." Rumi, following in the foot steps of Ibn al-Arabi, and further developing his doctrine, tries to convince man that his real self, far from being a product of Nature, is the source of all Nature. The physical body as well as the universe are the products and reflections of the transcendental self of man. Only he is afraid of the death who considers the universe more real than his own self. The ***soul*** is the ***substance*** and the ***universe*** is its ***attribute.*** Every death is a stepping-stone to rise to a higher life. The realization of this truth not only frees man from all fear of death, but also enables him to acquire progressive immortality.

These thoughts have typically Indian Vedantic ring.

SIMILARITY WITH VEDANTA

The ***Vedanta,*** literally meaning end, and figuratively meaning the goal, or purpose, or finality, connotes the highest wisdom and the last part of the ***Vedas,*** the ancient Hindu scriptures, constitutes of 108 treatises now extant collectivety known as the ***Upanishads.*** The ***Vedanta*** declares that the entire creation is but a manifestation of the Divine and the human soul is part and parcel of it, which has an eternal life and the death of the body does not constitute its end. The soul lives eternally and changes its physical forms at intervels. The death of the body is just like changing of the clothes. The soul has to undergo a cycle of lives before it can achieve its salvation and it hardly concerns a soul whether it puts on precious garments or tattered ones, namely, whether it has a covering of a highly developed person or a reptile. The soul is the same in all beings, animate or inanimate.(15)

The Vedanta promotes universal love and rationality, generates self- confidence and frowns upon fatalism. It is spiritual secularism and helps in orienting the mind of the individual towards service, compassion, nonacquisitiveness and realization that he is a part of the ***Universal Self*** and that he should not do anything which might have an effect of injuring a part of the ***Universal Self.***

The central theme of the Vedanta is the search for what is true. Knowledge, mind, the senses and their objects are all finite and conditioned. In the field of morals we find that we can not get true happiness from the finite. The pleasures of the world are transient.

Only the Infinite gives durable happiness. All this forces upon us the conviction of a spiritual reality, a timeless being, the object of philosophical quest. Vedanta tries to lead us to this central reality which is infinite existence and absolute truth.

The Corner-stone of Vedanta is the ideal to serve the sick, the poor or any one in distress. In this manner one offers prayers to God in the highest form. In short, Vedanta is a synthesis of all religious and moral philosophies and emphasizes on spiritual, ethical and humanitariam activities.

Rumi's Sufism and Vedanta have a lot in common and both teach this earthly life is only an interlude between two ends of a real life which is continuous and eternal. This aspect of realization is rare and simple and requires only guidance from a perfect preceptor as also a strict spiritual discipline. Though all this appears to be idealistic yet it is realistic also. It is further asserted that all differences which apparently are far from conciliation in reality do not exist. The clashes which occur everyday in the world are the result of ignorance and when ignorance is removed, clashes disappear and unity is experienced in diversity. Truth is the same everywhere, though it is known by different names in different languages.

The entire universe is the manifestation of one ***Divinity*** and the method of elimination as enunciated in the Vedanta by ***Neti Neti*** (not this) or by ***La*** (not this) in Sufism, the seeker realizes it. The seeker finds that the difference lies only in non-essentials. It is the removal of ignorance which is accomplished by different methods of ***Knowledge (Jnan or ilam), Devotion or Love (Bhakti*** or ***Ishq),*** and ***Action (Karma*** or ***Amal).*** When the goal is one, it is immaterial whether one reaches it one way or the other.(16)

CONCLUSION

Although The ***Mesnavi*** and ***Discourses*** of ***Jalaluddin Rumi*** claim to possess original ideas, a discerning reader will find shreds of light from various sources. We find Rumi derived his main inspiration from the ***Holy Quran,*** the ***Traditions,*** and the ***anecdotes from the life of the Prophet.*** We also find light of ***Semitic monotheism, Greek intellectualism*** represented by elements and eclectic theories of 'Being' and 'Becoming' of ***Pythagoras*** (d. 497 B.C.), theory of 'Ideas' of ***Plato*** (427 ?-347 B.C), theory of 'causation' and development of ***Aristotle*** (384-322 B.C.), the One and the 'ecstasy' that unites with One of ***Egyption-born Roman philosopher Plotinus*** (205 ? - 276 A.D.), and that man's soul springs from the Kingdom of Light (God) seeks escape from the Kingdom of Darkness (body) of ***Iranian philosopher Mani*** (216 - 276 A.D.). We also find in the ***Mesnavi*** many questions raised and possible answers to them by the earlier Islamic philosophers, such as, epistemological problems of ***Al-Farabi*** (870-950 A.D.) and ***Ibn-i-Sina (Avicenna)*** (980-1037 A.D.), theory of prophetic consciousness, ecstasy and moral transformation of ***Muhammad al-Ghazali,*** 'Monism' and ***Wahdat-al-Wajud*** (Unity of Existence) of ***Ibn al-Arabi.*** Along with all these we also find enough evidence of ***Indian thought,*** both ***Hindu*** and ***Buddhistic,*** particularly

Hindu Vedantic - Truth is the same everywhere and when the goal is one it is immaterial whether one reaches it one way or the other - amply reflected in the ***Mesnavi.*** All this wealth of thought of Maulana Rumi on philosophical, theological and mystical elements, unfortunately, has not been developed in a systematic way but is lying scattered. We can glean the basic elements and can come to the conclusion that the dynamic Sufism of Maulana Rumi has delivered a message of great importance which, among other theories, pertains to three epoch-making theories of philosophy, namely -

1. The Theory of Evolution.
2. The Etemality of the Soul.
3. The Transmigration of the Soul.

Rumi traces the gradual ***evolution*** of the human soul and explains how from the inanimate state the soul ascended to its human form and he holds out the hope that this very ***human soul*** has the potentiality to become ***Divine.*** It can be said that Darwin's theory is in regard to the evolution of the human body but Maulana Rumi's is with regard to the evolution of the soul which is Hindu Vedantic in outlook but also has a sanction from Islam (Quran XXIII : 13, 14, 15):

"Verily, We created man from an extract of clay; Then We placed him as a drop of sperm in a safe depository; Then We fashioned the sperm into a clot; Then We fashioned the clot into a ***shapeless*** lump; Then We fashioned bones of this ***shapeless*** lump; then We clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed it into another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of Creators."(17)

(XXIII : 13-15)

The ***etemality*** and the ***transmigration*** of the soul are quite evident from the verses of the ***Mesnavi.***

Rumi asserts that in his transcendental aspect man is already immortal, and by development, he can achieve personal immortality. He cared little for logical contradictions in the expression of his thoughts and sentiments. He has used many, and contradictory, opinions current before him, as his material and conceived a new structure where the outlines and basic features are entirely his own.

The philosophy of Rumi can be summed up, briefly, as follows :

Reality is one; all phenomena are aspects of the same Reality. All beings proceed from the Ultimate Reality, into the universe and back again to the same original source - Reality. Real knowledge cannot be obtained through logic only; personal experience is preferred than reason alone. The real aim of life is that one should perceive Reality through spiritual experience, so that it should again become one into Reality. The Spiritual perception is called Love; knowledge of Reality is inherent in Love. This love is the main spring of all religions and higher morality. Without Love, religion and morality become more formal and mechanical. Reason without Love remains in utter darkness.

Rumi considers the whole universe as emanating from one God and his pantheistic attitude declares that all that exists is God. Our soul is but a ray of His light, which has been severed from its real source and fallen into the engrossment of this base and physical world and is continuously striving to regain its fountainhead and for this passionate yearning to see the Beloved, the soul desires to tear off the intervening curtain of the physical body so that it once again becomes one with its source.

The human souls being real, inspite of their plurality, are one. Plurality is the product of the categories of ***time*** and ***space.*** This unity of the soul with the Ultimate Reality leads to a strict monism. This Rumi has explained by the analogy of the unity of light inspite of the plurality and variety of lamps. This soul is also eternal; that which is real is true and one, that which is true and one is necessarily eternal. There cannot be two Absolutes and the Absolute cannot be created; hence the soul in its real essence is eternal.

According to Rumi, life is a journey back to God. The process of evolution is in the following order : the mineral develops into plant, plant into animal, animal into man and man into ***superman*** ultimately to reach back the origin - God. Even the Holy Quran says - "God is the beginning and God is the end, and to Him do we return."

His philosophy of life insists on ceaseless activity and insatiable yearnings and these are characteristics of his Love. Intellect is desirable, but Love is more so. Through Love Intellect grows acquainted with Reality, and Intellect can give stability to the work of Love. Love needs Intellect to steer its course, to keep it confined within the bounds of Reality, but intellect can be ignored with great advantage at times. Love does not recognise conventional distinctions because a Lover knows not the difference between the Ka'aba and the Idol House.

According to Rumi it is open to us all to be Perfect men. Perfect Man is the image of God and is a miniature of reality. Every man can attain perfection by spiritual training and mystical ascent. The Perfect Man acquires a free personality, and becomes perfect God-man or ***Insan al-Kamil*** He also maintains that in every age there is an individual who is a Perfect Man.

Rumi asserts that space and time are only phenomenal. He says, "You are in space, but your essence is in the spaceless realm; close your business here and open it there. This world had come into existence out of the spaceless and out of the realm of the light of God. The past, present and future do not exist; so the past and future are two things only in relation to you; in reality they are one." Again, ***substance,*** according to him, is that which exists by itself, and ***attribute*** is that which exists only in relation to a substance. Thus the soul is the only substance and all things of the phenomenal world are collection of attributes only.

According to Rumi, man in his transcendental nature is already eternal and immortal, but, from the point of empirical existence in time, man can acquire progressive immortality. Modem science teaches the evolution of new species through struggle and selection (Darwinian theory), but Rumi teaches the evolution of individual soul-making through death. Every death, according to him, is a stepping-stone to rise to a higher life.

The simple faith founded on the basis of love of God and of man, tolerance and seeking of truth and Maulana Rumi's own dedicated life, works and teachings provided a philosophy of life and set an example of high thinking and simple living and his dictum "While beliefs vary from place to place, faith essentially is the same" provided the foundation for common culture from the middle ages of the history of the Middle Eastern Countries from the shores of the Bosporus to the boundaries of China with laudable results.

I have given above in brief outline the gist of Maulana Rumi's philosophy of life, but if philosophy "is the unseen foundation on which the structure of a civilisation rests; as asserted by Sir S. Radhakrishnan in *Kalki or the Future of Civilisation,* there is no phase of human activity in which Rumi does not provide us with guidance. To describe Maulana Rumi's philosophy in general would need volumes. Still enough has been said to show that Rumi's philosophy brings spiritual awakening, hope and cheer to humanity caught up by its own selfishness, greed, envy, jealousy, insincerity, pride and passion for aggrandizement. Maulana Rumi prescribes the basis for human society on such spiritual considerations where colour, caste and race cease to count and every individual, irrespective of the belief he holds dear, can live with fellow beings in peace, tranquillity, understanding, amity, happiness and harmony.

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CHAPTER - VII

MAULAVI (TURKISH MEVLEVI) ORDER OF DERVESHES

The special ***Maulavi (Turkish Mevlevi) Order of Derveshes*** is said to have been instituted by ***Maulana Rumi*** in 1246 A.D. when his friend, associate and spiritual mentor, ***Shamsuddin Tabrizi,*** left Qoniya after the tumult and riot which preceded, and fled to Damascus. The special dress of the Derveshes which, according to Aflaki, is the Indian garb of mourning, was instituted by the Founder in memory of his spiritual guide Shams Tabrizi who was surnamed "the Sultan of Mendicants". Very little is known about the Life of Shams Tabrizi except that some of his followers spoke of him as the Perfect One of Tabriz. ***J. P. Brown,*** in his ***Dervishes,***(1) styles him a ***Qalandari.*** Qalandariyas laid greater stress on the qualities of "humility, lowliness, selflessness, asceticism and renunciation," wandered from place to place, and indulged in musical sessions, ***sama,*** and dervesh dances. According to ***Al-Maqrisi,*** they first appeared in Damascus. It is for this reason, perhaps, Shams Tabrizi, who was in Damascus prior to coming to Qoniya, came to be generally known as a Qalandari.

The ***Mevlavi*** derveshes make use of different kinds of musical instruments, such as, the flute, the rebeck, the drum and the tambourine. Singing and dancing form a feature of their public services of worship and commemoration. Regarding instituting the musical and dancing services in his Order, Jalaluddin Rumi himself is said to have related that when he perceived that the people at large of Rum had no inclination for the practice of religious austerities, no striving for a knowledge of the divine mysteries, he thought of bringing to use poetical exhortation and musical service. He also thought that the masses, particularly the Turkish people of Rum, would be more easily attracted to spiritual exercises through poetry and music and dance, and, therefore, devised the entire exercise of music and dance. It so happened the 'Rumis', or the people of Rum, were led by dance and music to form a taste for spiritual exercise and thronged to the ***Khanqah*** (Monastry) of Maulana Rumi. In a short time, Maulana Rumi had a huge following of disciples.

Maulana Rumi was particularly fascinated by the idea of rotation; in fact, all natural phenomena came within the gamut of his imagery. To him the dancing and music, the drum, the reed-pipe, the whirling movements of the derveshes, all have special mystic meanings. To him most characterstic feature of the Mevlevi, or Maulavi, ritual is the celebrated ***Whirling Dance.*** This dance is performed in a ceremony called ***Zikr,*** the term originally means remembrance' of God. The purpose of this is, apart from its devotional aspect, the procuring of ecstatic experience. It is also a pleasant social occasion, and serves to knit together the heterogeneous attending it. People from all walks of life partake in this ceremony.

After Jalaluddin Rumi, the headman of the Order was Husam who was styled Chalabi. He died in 1284 A.D., just ten years after his master and spiritual precepter, and then Jalaluddin's son Bahauddin Sultan Walad succeeded Husam. This way control of the Mevlevi Order is still in the family of Maulana Jalaluddin. The Superior of the Order bears the spiritual title of ***Chalabi Effendi.***

A number of travellers, who have witnessed the Whirling Dance, have described the details. The following is **E.W. lane's** description of a Mevlevi performance which he attended in Egypt in the early part of the nineteenth century at a time when the influence of the Order was at its height :

"Most of the durweeshes were Egyptians; but there were among them many Turks and Persians. I had not waited many minutes before they began their exercise. Several of them first drove back the surrounding crowd with sticks; but as no stick was raised at me, I did not retire as far as I ought to have done; and before I was aware of what the durweeshes were about to do, forty of them, with extended arms, and joined hands, had formed a large ring, in which I found myself enclosed. For a moment I felt half inclined to remain where I was, and join in the Zikr; bow, and repeat the name of God; but another moments reflection on the absurdity of the performance, and the risk of my being discovered to be no durweesh, decided me otherwise; so, parting the hands of two of the durweeshes, I passed outside the ring. The durweeshes who formed the large ring (which enclosed four of the marble columns of the portico) now commenced their Zikr; exclaiming over and over again, “Allah"; and, at each exclamation, bowing the head and body, and taking a step to the right; so that the whole ring moved rapidly round. As soon as they commenced this exercise, another durweesh, a Turk, of the order of Mowlawees, in the middle of the circle, began to whirl; using both his feet to effect this motion, and extending his arms; the motion increased in velocity until his dress spread out like an umbrella. He continued whirling thus for about ten minutes; after which he bowed to his superior, who stood within the great ring; and then, without showing any signs of fatigue or giddiness, joined the durweeshes in the great ring; who had now begun to ejaculate the name of God with greater vehemence, and to jump to the right, instead of stepping. After whirling, six other durweeshes, within the great ring, formed another ring; but a very small one; each placing his arms upon the shoulders of those next him; and thus disposed, they performed a revolution similar to that of the large ring, except in being much more rapid; repeating, also, the same exclamation of 'Allah'; but with a rapidity proportionately greater. This motion they maintained for about the same length of time that the whirling of the single durweesh before had occupied; after which, the whole party sat down to rest. They rose again after the lapse of about a quarter of an hour; and performed the same exercises a second time."(2)

Such were the exercises whereby the Sufi derveshes sought to reach a sense of exaltation, in which they felt themselves to be in the presence of God. The derveshes, and other seekers after truth, who were familiar with the teachings of their Order, found the ritual to abound in significant mysteries, and related their successive moods and feelings to the theoratical speculations of their Masters. The Mevlevi Order of Derveshes achieved paramount influence in Turkey under the Ottomans and wielded great political power. Its monasteries were scattered throughout the Ottoman dominions.

The Derveshes of the Mevlevi Order even now continue to dance the way they used to do - dressed in long red fez caps and black tassels, flowing white skirts pirouetting round and round in circles to the beat of drums and notes of the flutes. It is indeed a spectacular sight.

NOTES AND REFERENCES :

1. ***Dervishes,*** p. 260.
2. Quoted by Arbeny A. J., in ***Sufism,*** (1956), pp. 00-91. from E. W. Lane's *Manners **and Customs of the Modem Egyptians.***

CHAPTER - VIII

RUMI AND TURKISH LITERATURE

Maulana Rumi was a versatile genius. One thing which is so ramarkable and stands out in his case is that he lived for full half a century among Turki speaking people yet he does not seem to have contributed anything worthwhile to Turkish literature inspite of all his mystic achievements and his splendid literary ability.

It was perhaps so because the Seljuk Turks came to the Anatolian Peninsula, or Asia Minor, in the beginning of the Eleventh Century A.D. when three languages were already in usage, namely, Persian in the mainland, Greek in the coastal areas of the Meditarranean Sea, and Arabic in the south-east of the Peninsula contiguous to Syria and Kurdistan. With the emergence of Seljuk Turks, Turki was introduced which, for quite some time, remained only the colloquial language, or the language of the masses, but the official language, or the language of the literati, was still Persian freely patronized and promoted by the ruling elite in the Anatolian Peninsula. As such, in the Thirteenth Century it has been found that there is hardly anything written by Maulana Rumi in the Turkish tongue.

Sometime ago, an attempt was made by a scholarly personage of the Mevlavi Order, Walad Chalabi by name, who made a careful examination of the works of the master with the express purpose of discovering to what extent he had made use of the Turkish language, if any, and the only reward of this labour of his was one complete ***Ghazal*** of the type known as the ***Mulemma*** was found, that also written in mingled Turkish and Persian. Besides, in some of his Persian lyrics, a few Turkish distichs appear.

According to Walad Chalabi, Maulana Rumi also wrote some verses in Greek which was still the language of a good part of the Anatolian Peninsula and are preserved.

The scholars, by and large, give the credit of founding the Turkish, or Osmanli, or Western Turkish literature, to Sultan Walad, son of Maulana Rumi; but, according to some other scholars, the Western Turkish literature was founded during the life-time of Rumi which was greatly developed by his son Sultan Walad. E.J.W. Gibb says, "If Sultan Walad really was the first - and we know of none before him - to seriously attempt literary poetry in the Western Turkish language, his success is marvellous. To Sultan Walad then belongs not only the honour due to the pioneer in every good work, but the credit which is justly his who successfully accomplishes an arduous enterprise."(1)

Though Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi's contribution to the Turkish tongue was minimal, his great personality, the influence of his works, both in poetry and prose, his remarkable achievements in mysticism and the impact of his Mevlavi Order of Derveshes had immensely influenced Turkish poetry, in particular, and literature in general. Turkish poets of those days poured forth innumerable 'spiritual couplets' of a mystical nature.

Indeed, nearly all the Ottoman poets of the period were either true Sufis, or men who wrote after the manner of the Sufis. This influence continued for a long time even after the demise of Maulana Rumi which, centuries afterwards, was responsible for giving to Turkey one of her greatest poets, namely, **Sheikh Ghalib.** It was much later that the influence of Maulana Rumi gradually weakened and Turkish poetry became less mystical.

NOTES AND REFERENCES ;

1. *History of Ottoman Poetry*, ***Vol. 1, p. 152.***

CHAPTER - IX

POPULARITY OF RUMI IN AMERICA

For over seven centuries, Maulana Rumi's beautiful poetry has been sung from India to Iran, Turkey to Afghanistan and other Central Asian countries where Persian is spoken and understood. He is considered as an ecstatic, a romantic obsessed with God, exalting the divine universality of the heart in everything and everyone.

It was in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century that Rumi's works were translated into English by a few British scholars, rhyme to rhyme and rhythm to rhythm in a scholarly manner, that they became accessible to the English-knowing readers and became quite popular with the scholars and students alike of the West.

About fifteen years ago, great interest in Rumi's poetry and though it was generated in America when American poet ***Robert Bly*** handed over to his younger colleague by the name of ***Coleman Barks*** an edition of the nineteenth century scholarly translation by a British into English of Rumi's poetry with the advice : "Release these from their scholarly cages." Thereupon, Barks set to work, recasting the poem in fluid, casual American - English free verse. The results were astonishing. Barks' translation of the ***Mesnavi,*** under the title ***The Essential Rumi,*** published in 1995, have sold more than a quarter of a million copies where in a country Pulitzer Prize-winning poets often struggle to sell ten thousand books. This was followed in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, by another pricy hard back book entitled ***The Soul of Rumi,*** about four hundred pages of poetry translated by Barks. Put it all together, interest in the poetry, thought and philosophy of Maulana Rumi has been greatly revived in America.

About Rumi, the translator ***Barks*** says, "He celebrates the Presence, he calls it the Friend or the Beloved, that we sense in the beauty outside of us on a rainy day, or in a group of friends fixing food, a horse being saddled, or a child sleeping. All of these things that are obviously beautiful outside of us also touch the beauty inside of us that jewel-like inner presence that he activates in the poetry."

It is quite remarkable that poet Coleman Barks does not know Persian and has worked from other people's translations and has made no attempts to replicate the rhyme and rhythm of the original Persian composition, as was done by the earlier English scholars, yet he has done a good job by rendering the essence of the poems into free verse which the people of all denominations in America have grabbed and relished with alacrity.

A few specimens of the translation renderings of ***Coleman Barks*** in ***The Essential Rumi*** are given here.

1. Rumi reflects on the spiritual journey that welcomes uncertainty and places the burden of responsibility on the individual to make enlightened choices :

"This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness.

Some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all;
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows;
Who violently sweep your house
Empty of it's furniture,
Still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out For some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
Meet them at the door laughing.
And invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
Because each has been sent as a guide from beyond."

2. Describing the force of Love, he says -

"The minute I heard my first love story
I started looking for you,
Not knowing how blind that I was,
Lovers don't finally meet somewhere
They're in each other all along,"
"Like the spear pierces the shield in a moment.
I passed through nights and days.
This is why all beliefs and religions are for me
One and hundred thousand of years just a moment..."
"Come, come again, whoever you are, come;
Heathen, fire worshipper or idolatrous, come;
Come even if you broke your penitence a hundred times.

Ours is the portal of hope, come as you are."
"A nation of Love has a different religion.
For them God alone is their nation and religion."
"By love, dead are made to live;
By love, the sovereign is made a slave...
For Lovers the faith and religion is God."
And Maulana's final message would be;
"Get united....
I came here not to divide but to unify."

3. People in the East as well as in the West can associate with his message of Love, because it is a universal feeling for which mankind is thirsty. He says-

"I am neither of the East nor of the West;
No boundaries exist in my breast"
"When someone mentions the gracefulness of the night sky?
Climb up on the roof and dance
And say. Like this.
When someone quotes the old poetic image
About clouds gradually uncovering the moon,
Slowly loosen knot by knot the strings of your robe.
Say Like this.
If anyone wonders how Jesus raised the dead,
Don't try to explain the miracle.
Kiss me on the lips.
Like this. Like this."

"I asked for a kiss you gave me six.
Whose pupil were you to become such a master?
Full of kindness, generosity...
You are not of this world."

4. Again, he says emphatically -

"If you have lost heart in the Path of Love,
Flee to me without delay
I am a fortress; invincible."

The Love and Spiritualily which Rumi represents has obviously touched a very deep nerve in the American psyche so much so that scholars, teachers, literati, students and even laity have evinced keen interest in the poetry and mysticism of the master. The reasons for this popular phenomenon in America are not far to seek.

Firstly, the West, in general, and America, in particular, have been exposed to, and fed with, the severe fundamentalist image of Islam; the ecstatic, rapturous and mystic feeling of Islam represented by Sufis has been less familiar to them. The ***Mesnavi of Rumi*** is a collection of stories relating to prophets such as ***Moses, Jesus*** and ***Muhammad*** and many Sufi saints of yore, and the themes dealt with are tolerance, love of the Divine and the remembrance of the Divine. When these in the form of translations were thrown open to the scholars and New Age enthusiasts in America they simply lapped them up. ***Carl Ernst,*** head of religious studies at the

University of North Carolina of Chapel Hill, has very rightly said about Rumi; "He's such a spokesman for freedom and transcendence that people have found him to be a great literary voice for centuries."

Secondly, mysticism in Christianity was relegated to an insignificant place ever since the Gnostics (Christian mystics) were discredited as heretics by the early Christian religious leaders. The mystical tradition never blossomed in the mainstream Christianity to the extent that it has in the Islamic Sufi tradition. Poet ***Robert Bly*** feels that Maulana Rumi's highly mystical and ecstatic poetry now seems to have filled the place in the Christian tradition. However, according to ***Fatemeh Keshavarz,*** professor of Persian language and literature at Washington University, St. Louis, Rumi "doesn't try to describe mystical love, he tries to linguistically show it to us. He mirrors his experience of mystical love". This would sum up the general feeling of the scholars in America.

Thirdly, in the ***Mesnavi,*** Rumi is countering the notion that any religion, more so Islam, is antithetical to secular thought. He likens the world to a tavern, where people drunk with desire and longing, mingle around until they realize their calling to God whose sweeping love supercedes all earthly love from the most mundane to the deepest passions. In this connection, ***Maliha Masood,*** a graduate of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and now a resident of Seattle, Washington, very correctly says about Rumi : "He poses a question that we have all asked ourselves at some point or another : Where did I come from, and what am 1 supposed to be doing?' His answer : I have no idea. My soul is from elsewhere, I am sure of that, and I intend to end up there."

Fourthly, the poetry and thought of Maulana Rumi have deeply touched the heart of the people from scholars to New Age enthusiasts in America. ***Daniel Ladinsky,*** a South Carolina poet who spent many years in India, and is now working on the translation of poetry of Shamsuddin Mohammad Hafiz, a fourteenth century Persian Sufi poet, says, "My experience of a poet-saint is he affects the deepest regions of one's intelligence and heart." He further says that Rumi and Hafiz address his "profound need to make sense out of God....I simply want to get along with the One I have to live with."

Fifthly, the dual poetic and spiritual nature of Rumi's ***Mesnavi*** has also caught up the imagination of laity in America. ***Addle Wolbach,*** a housewife living in Boston, started reading the poetry of Maulana Rumi some years back and says, "People are hungrier and thirstier for things of the heart. I am not looking for poetry. I am looking for the Master's words - his 'truth'." Another admirer of Rumi, ***Josie Hanlon*** also of Boston says, "It's all about honesty and going in deeply within. He's speaking his 'truth' from a place of clarity and openness." The majority of the people reading Rumi in America are looking for a spiritual quick relief and relate to his poetry and philosophy.

Some critics in America compare revival of interest in Maulana Rumi to similar fads, such as, the burst of interest in the soulstirring poetry of Kahlil Gibran about forty years ago. But many scholars such as Carl Ernst believe the Rumi phenomenon is much bigger. He says, "I think it's extremely interesting that, at the same time, politically speaking, there is this intense, ideological confrontation with Islamic fundamentalism".

Since many Americans now admire and relate to Rumi's philosophy of tolerance, love and understanding, it is his soul-searching and God-loving poetry which can dispel any doubts they entertain about Islam which embraces humanity and stands for pluralism, tolerance, fellow-feeling and amity and can build bridges of understanding over the growing chasm between Islam and the West.

Sixthly, Americans are now among the most materially fortunate people in the world. They can also afford the luxury of spiritual exploration that the developing nations, caught up in the daily stresses of basic survival, are less equipped to indulge in. Therefore, the message of Rumi, in this context, becomes more relevant to Americans grappling with spiritual exploration and quick relief. They derive trememdous satisfaction and spiritual serenity. His message is a universal feeling for which mankind is thirsty.

Seventhly, in the recent times, especially post September 11, 2001, the poetry of Rumi is looked upon by many of the Americans as a necessary voice to bridge the gap between the Islam which stands for pluralism and tolerance and the belligerent religion represented by the fundamentalist and extremist factions, and therefore they admire and relate to his philosophy : "While beliefs vary from place to place, faith is essentially the same". This universal outlook is greatly appreciated by all.

In fine, the God - intoxicated and full of love poetry and philosophy of Rumi urging a spiritual union with the divine, all abiding love for God, tolerance, seeking of truth, building bridges of understanding, the message of love - love for its own sake, have touched the American people so deep, so perfect, so endearing, that they cannot help penetrating their hearts. His popularity in America is very significant and is on the upswing.

NOTES AND REFERENCES :

Some of the references in this chapter are taken from the Internet.

CHAPTER - X

GREAT QUOTES OF RUMI

Jalaluddin Rumi's discipline and wisdom have crossed all national and ethnic borders ever since the thirteenth century and Rumi has come to be acknowledged as a great spiritual master and poet in Persian. His poetry is, in fact, a series of mystical experience – a reflection on nature's beauty, a song, a dance, an idea, a feeling – anything that makes us better human beings. Rumi stands out among poets and mystics that show us the importance of every experience be it good or bad. Here are a few quotes of Rumi which inspire us and give a more positive outlook on life even today.

"What you seek is seeking you."

"Your task is not to seek for love, but merely
to seek and find all the barriers within
yourself that you have built against it."

"Don't grieve. Anything you lose
comes around in another form."

"Stop acting small, you are the

universe in ecstatic motion."

"Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted
to change the world. Today I am wise,
so I am changing myself."

"You were born with wings, why
prefer to crawl through life?"

" Don't be satisfied with stories,
how things have gone with others.
Unfold your own myth."

"Why should I be unhappy?
Every parcel of my being is in
full bloom."

"And so it is, that both the devil
and the angelic spirits present us
with objects of desire to awaken our
power of choice."

"Raise your words, not voice.

It is the rain that grows flowers,
not thunder."

"Ignore those that make you fearful
and sad, that degrade you back
towards disease and death."

"Words are a pretext. It is the
inner bond that draws one person
to another, not words."

"Goodbyes are only for those
who love with their eyes. Because
for those who love with heart and soul
there is no such thing as separation."

"Set your life on fire Seek those
who fan your flames."

"The wound is the place where
light enters you."

"Wherever you are, and whatever
you do, be in love."

"Reason is powerless in the
expression of love."

"You have to keep breaking
your heart untill it opens."

"These pains you feel are
messengers. Listen to them."

"Your heart is the size of an ocean.
Go find yourself in its hidden depths."

"Everything that is made beautiful and
fair and lovely is made for the eye of
one who sees."

"Through Love all that is bitter will
be sweet, Through Love all that is

copper will be gold, Through Love all dregs will become wine, Through Love all pain will turn to medicine."

"Everyone has been made for some particular work, and the desire for that work has been put on every heart."

"That which is false troubles the heart, but truth brings tranquility."

"I am neither of the East nor
of the West, no boundaries exist
within my breast."

"When someone beats a rug,
the blows are not against the rug,
but against the dust in it."

"There is an invisible strength within us; when it recognizes two opposing objects of desire, it grows stronger."

"Woman is a ray of God.
She is not that earthly beloved;
She is creative, not created."

EPILOGUE

The most remarkable phenomena of our times is the growing closeness and unification of the world. With great advancement in communication, information technology and tremendous scientific development people of the world are coming into ever closer proximity. Globalization is inevitable. With globalization taking place, we need a new vision of the World Order, a clearer insight into the fundamentals of ethics and religion. We need a deeper understanding and appreciation of all peoples, their civilizations, their cultures, especially their moral and spiritual achievements.

A time has come when the East and the West need to build bridges of understanding and amity rather than talk about the "clash of civilizations". It is necessary to reach out to other civilizations and cultures. On what basis can the dialogue of civilizations take place? For this purpose, among other things, Maulana Rumi's works, teachings and philosophy can be a great source of inspiration for all people. From his point of view people of faith from diverse religions and cultures can work for this understanding. As he said : "While beliefs vary from place to place, faith is essentially the same."

Great religions of the world, no doubt, differ in many respects, but they, in reality, are not so far from one another as they seem. On a closer look it would appear that the differences among religions are differences only of words, names, language; or of non-essential superficial forms; and sometimes of emphasis, on this aspect of Truth, or of Virtue, or of Duty, rather than another; never of essential Ideas. The essentials of Religion - Truth, Virtue, Wisdom, Duty - are eternal, universal, impersonal, and are unchanging in substance. There is an enormous amount of common ground in all the great religions. All great religions tell us that God, the Universal Self, is the one True, Beautiful, Good, is all-pervading, all uniting, is benevolent, beneficient, wholly Good. Thus we see that all great religions are in essence exactly the same; that the essence comes from God, and is intended in all to lead back to God by the various disciplines of mysticism, gnosticism, yoga, suluk etc. The seeds of such mystic, spiritual and psychical exercise and discipline are sown in all religions for its accomplishments. All great religions declare that God is all, from which it follows that since Man is in essence God, the service of fellowmen is the service of God.

The need of this age is to remove the misunderstanding and non-essential superficial forms of religions by breaking the artificial barriers and to flow together in harmony. Taking a cue from Maulana Rumi's dictum, people of faith from various religions and cultures can effectively work for this great cause for the general good of mankind.

There is going to be a Renaissance of Man's spirit : when men everywhere will be happy and contented amid the beauty and bounty of the world, when their eyes will see that egoism and strife are folly and that the **World is Spiritual** and that they will take cognisance as mentioned in the Hadis Sharif - *At-khalq ayal Allah* - **all men are the family of God.**

A new journey lies ahead for humanity to travel. Many men of faith will be seeking to walk along that road in the company of God and will desire to recapture in their own hearts the ecstatic joy experienced by Sufis like Maulana Rumi to comfort them. Many will succeed in the process of forming a pattern of thought and behaviour based on the vital truths of the Sufis which will satisfy the needs of many seeking the re-establishment of moral and spiritual values. The Sufi teachings of Maulana Rumi, his philosophy and the lessons we learn from him, assume greater importance in this context.

It is no wonder therefore that interest in the mysticism and Sufistic teachings of Maulana Rumi is once again gathering momentum throughout the world and that his philosophy of life is being thoroughly reappraised for global acceptance by people of different beliefs. In the envisioned New World Order, upon which all modern thinkers have pinned their hopes for survival of mankind, Maulana Rumi's teachings and philosophy are going to play a very significant role.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

RUMI'S TASAWWUF AND VEDANTIC MYSTICISM

BY

R.M. CHOPRA

M.A., LL.B.

Mysticism is defined as the eternal yearning of the human soul to have a direct experience of the Ultimate Reality. The mystic sentiment grows out of the human aspirations for personal and direct communion with the Supreme Lord. When strong spiritual emotion cannot be satisfied by the orthodox or formal approach to the Supreme Being, the mystic ideals are cherished and cultivated. These are unvarying phenomena of yearning of the human spirit for personal experience of God. (1)

Evelyn Underhill aptly defines mysticism "to be expression of the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the Transcendental Order; whatever be the theological formula under which that order is understood. This tendency, in great mystics, gradually captures the whole field of consciousness; it dominates their life, and in the experience called mystic union (the Ecstasy, the Absorption in God, the*Fana* of the Sufis) attains its end.

Based on text of paper presented at the International Seminar on MaulanaJalaluddin Rumi held at the Iran Society on August 26, 2007. *Also in Appendix in Sufism* by R.M. Chopra published by AnuradhaPrakashan, ISBN 978-93-85083-52-5 pp. 402-424.

Whether that end be the God of "the various religions", the World-Soul of Pantheism, the Absolute of Philosophy, the desire to attain it and the movement towards it – so long as this is a genuine life process and not an intellectual speculation – is the proper subject of Mysticism." (2)

Mysticism is a natural phenomenon that develops from the impact of external forces with internal conditions. Hence, in a comprehensive view, all these facts have to be taken into considerations, for it cannot be attributed to any single influence. On the internal side the social, political and economic conditions of the time, and on the external side the presence of foreign influences in the form of intellectual observations and spiritual findings of the sages and savants of various creeds, collectively favour, the growth of mystic tendencies. It must, therefore, be understood that mysticism is common to all religions and creeds, it only bears a distinct stamp of its nomenclature in different religions.

The mystics lay great emphasis on purification and discipline of the individual and exhort the people to remain self-contented, apathetic to all enjoyments of this world, and have the least feeling of want. These are the stages for realization of their end – communion with the Supreme Being. The whole system of mysticism centres round two questions : "How is man to realize God in himself ?" and "What is God in relation to the individual and the creation ?" Mysticism shows way or path in answer to the first, and imparts knowledge which describes God, in answer to the second. The key-note of mysticism is love of God and establishment of an intimate connection between God and man.

The mystics dedicate their lives to the unbounden love and intense remembrance of God.

I

Tasawwuf, or Sufism, or Islamic Mysticism, is also known as *Ilm-i-Ruhani*, 'Theosophy' or God-Wisdom, or Divine Knowledge. There is a tradition among Muslim mystics that Imam Ali, the fourth Caliph, first declared to the 'select', who were qualified and ready for it, the Ancient Wisdom which is now commonly known as *Tasawwuf*. *Tasawwuf* is another and inherent aspect of the Way of Knowledge, for the realization of the identity of all selves in the Universal Self.

Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273 A.D.), a thirteenth century mystic-poet, who is hailed as the greatest mystic-poet of the Persian literature, has written his *Mesnavi*, composed of twentysix thousand and six hundred verses divided into six books. It is an epic literature and has been acclaimed as the complete scripture of *Tasawwuf*. The Persian poet Jami (1414-1492 A.D.) has described it as –

Mesnavi-i-Ma'navi-i-Maulavi
Hast Quran darZuban-i-Pehlavi.

(The profound 'Mesnavi' of Maulavi Rumi
Is the Quran composed in the language of Iran.)

Rumi has summed up in his monumental *Mesnavi*, in Persian, all that had been said or written on *Tasawwuf* in Arabic before him and is also said to have extracted the essence of the

Holy Quran and presented in his work. The *Mesnavi* is the expression of peaceful devotions and profound philosophy in sublime poetry.

Rumi maintains that the knowledge of Reality cannot be obtained through the senses. If we are to reach Reality, we must withdraw from the world of sense into that of inner experience. The sense can reach us only upto the World of Appearance but not to the World of Reality. In order to reach the World of Reality we have to take recourse to intuitive reason, or gnosis or '*M'arifat*, or mystic sense, which, according to him, is the only short cut to the World of Reality.(3)

According to Rumi, the knowledge of God can only be attained by illumination, revelation and inspiration. To know God one should know his own self. "Look into your heart," he affirms, "for the kingdom of God is within you." He who knows himself, knows God. The heart is like a mirror in which every Divine quality is reflected. (4)

Thus God of Rumi, thought transcendental – not conceivable to human conceptions, is yet immanent is everything in the universe. "He is immanent in all beings. He is transcendent because He is above all limitations and individualization. His manifestation in limited or finite forms constitutes His immanence, but His being Himself above such limitation constitutes His transcendence. He is the *Unity* behind the multiplicity and *Reality* behind the appearance." (5) That Inconceivable One is the Absolute One of philosophy. Rumi says –

Gar tawahhum mi-kunad u ishq-i-zat;
Zat na – bud wahmi-asma wa safat;
Wahm zayida za-ausaf wa had ast
Haqqna-zayida-st u – "lam yulad" ast.

(If he conceives that he is in love with Essence of God;
Conception of divine names and attributes is not the Essence
Conception is begotten of qualities and definition;
God is not begotten, He is "lam yulad"). (6)

Thus God of Rumi, thought transcendental is yet immanent in everything in the world. To Rumi, God is Pure being and Absolute Beauty. He is everywhere and in everything. Therefore, every man must seek knowledge and the light of the Supreme Being in this world.(7)

Rumi also believes that God is the only being and he is the only real source of all other beings. Since God is the only Being, the other beings are mere appearances. Rumi's doctrines of unity is: God alone really exist; there is nothing but God. The world of phenomena and of senses is a mere mirage – a reflection of *Being* on *Not Being*, manifesting the attributes of *Being* as the reflection manifests its original, not really participating in its nature.(8)

"According to Rumi, all paths lead to one straight path which leads to God. All religions and creeds with their differences are but one Universal Religion. The differences between polytheism and monotheism corresponds to the logical difference between the *One* and the *Many*. In polytheism what is worshipped is a form and aspect of God. Actually there is nothing that is worshipped except God."(9)

On an enquiry what is *Tasawwuf*? Rumi replied, "(It is) to be forgetfulness of this world." The mysticism of Rumi is: the one aim to disconnect of this world of phenomena and to be reunited with the *Origin* where one eternally rests.

The mystic's path to achieve his aim is a logical process based upon its own epistemology, according to which *knowledge* is of two kinds, namely –

1. *Ilam*, or Intellectual Knowledge, and
2. *M'arifat*or Gnosis, or Intuitional Knowledge.

Through the first, that is, Intellectual Knowledge, knowledge of the Universe, of Appearances, is obtained; whereas through the second, that is, Intuitional Knowledge, knowledge of Realities is obtained which gives direct insight into Truth. The object of Intuitional Knowledge is the obtention of cosmic consciousness, beatific vision, absorption in ecstatic union with Truth which leads the soul to the realizations of its unity with God. Maulana Rumi was aware that Reality is not only unknown but is unknowable by purely intellectual methods, and the mystic sense, or the intuition, in man remains the only way to reach Reality. Rumi, therefore, epitomized the entire history of the phenomenal world as viewed by the mystic – the progress of man out of God, into the universe, and back again to God. Love, according to Rumi, is the greatest force in human life. It is indescribable in any language. It presents a paradox in as much as in by giving, we take, and by dying we live.(10) With the help of this love, the soul transcends through all barriers and sees the Reality in every created object. Rumi's view of love is very much akin to the notion of intuition developed by later European philosophers who maintain that it is through intuition that we can grasp the identity of the world that transcends all contradiction and relation.(11)

Rumi has argued that if by assimilating feature of love matter could progress by stages to the state of manhood there can be no obstacle in the way of evolution of man to the Infinite Being by his acquiring the qualities of God. (12)

The other way, prescribed by Rumi, to reach the Reality, is to take a spiritual guide, or *Murshid*, and through his help the seeker can be enlightened. Rumi says, "Go seek at once a friend of God. When you have done so, God would become your friend and the road of light will again be visible." He says -

Chunke kard szat murshid raqabul
Ham khuda dar zat-ish amad ham rasul.

(When the refuge of Murshid is sought
With a pure, innocent heart,
Then God, Prophet and all the Great Souls
Are realized in the form of Murshid.)(13)

The Murshid, possessing his disinterested benevolence for his disciple, keeping his perseverant and independent gaze upon the Truth, acts as the perfect administrator of his disciple. By giving wonderful illustrations and beautiful parables Murshid fixes in his disciples what they wish to and leads them on to the path reaching the Ultimate Reality.

Rumi considers the whole universe as emanating from one God and his pantheistic attitude declares that all that exists is God. Our soul is but a ray of His light which has been severed from its source and fallen into the engrossment of this world and is continuously striving to regain its fountainhead. Life, according to him, is a journey back to God.

Rumi preaches a life of ceaseless activity and insatiable yearnings to achieve personal freedom and immortality. According to him, love is the greatest force in human life. All the processes of evolution, assimilation and growth are manifestations of this love. He is a firm believer that a mystic's love not only attracts the creation, but also the

Creator.

II

Vedantic Mysticism, or 'Divine Knowledge', or 'Spiritual Science', is also known as *Brahman-Vidya* (Knowledge of God), or *Atman-Vidya* (Knowledge of the Soul), and is the outcome of the Upanishads. The Upanishads antedate the birth of Buddha in the seventh century B.C. They are a mystical interpretations of man and God and the universe. Known as the "*Vedanta*", because they constitute the end of Vedas, or that whole body of philosophic development from 1500 to 700 B.C. which, in a sense, is an anthology of transcendental thinking on man's search for infinite bliss, constitutes of 108 treatises, now extant, collectively known as the Upanishads. The Upanishads are made up of utterance of dedicated men and women, over the centuries, who were engaged in the pursuit of Truth. Wisdom for them involved not merely the intellect but the entire conduct of life was at stake and success depended on understanding the meaning and destiny of man and the Universe. The sages affirmed that the Upanishads were revealed to them by the power of their penance, self-discipline, devotion, and the grace of God. These were the deliverance of seers and savants in a state of God-intoxication. (14)

In the Rig Veda it is mentioned -

Eka sad bipra bahuda vadanti

"Truth is one, sages call it variously." (15)

The theme of the Upanishads,(16) or Vedanta, is to find an ultimate unity of things. Knowledge is nothing but finding unity in the midst of diversity. According to Swami Vivekananda, the Upanishads have a distinct mystic strain; mysticism is the experience of an individual. It is only by that experience, which one attains by intuitional knowledge and rigorous discipline, that one realizes the unity with the Supreme Being and becomes part of that.

The Upanishads contain descriptions of the transcendent and the immanent aspect of *Brahman* (God). The Immanent *Brahman* dwells in the universe and is to be sought therein, 'Having created the universe, He entered into it.' The fundamental thought that runs through the whole body of the Upanishads is the sole reality of *Brahman* (God), or *Atman* (soul). Though perceived to be immanent in the universe, *Brahman* remains transcendent. 'It is inside all this and It is outside all this'. The Rig-Veda states that *Brahman* covers the whole universe and yet transcends it.(17)

The Upanishads also discuss the means by which higher knowledge can be obtained. The end of this endeavor is to know *Brahman* (God) or the *Atman* (soul) and this knowledge is, therefore, named the *Brahma-Vidya* or the

Atma-Vidya. The way to higher knowledge leads to the state of unity, the realization of identity, confluence of being and thought.(18)

The Upanishads teach the truth – unknown to the sense-organs – regarding living beings, the universe, and God. They describe the nature and attributes of God, His reality and manifestations, His powers and aspects. They also describe the creation, preservation, and ultimate dissolution of the universe, the changes and modifications of nature. The Upanishads also deal with the development of the individual soul, its evolution and its destiny, its bondage and its freedom.

According to the Upanishads, man is rooted in a reality far deeper than is apparent to the senses. Just as only a small portion of an iceberg is visible, so only a small portion of man is available to the senses, no matter how their powers may be magnified. The solution of most of our vital problems must come from regions beyond the scope of the faculty of reason.

It is further held that only the Knowledge of *Brahman* (God) can break the 'fetters of the heart' by intuitional knowledge, and solve all doubts. By intuitional knowledge, intelligence of man deepens, the heart of man is made pure and his mental horizon widens and, in that state, he understands and appreciates the teachings as enshrined in the Vedas and the Upanishads. In order to reach that stage certain preparatory conditions and a discipline are required which should be in consonance with the Law of Dharam (the way of righteousness). The preparatory conditions are : deep study, worship, and a rigorous discipline constituting of penance, devotion, dedication and practice.

The *Swetasvatara Upanishad* describes the practice and explains its philosophy. The practice consists of two parts. The first part prescribes a physiological discipline, such as, control of breath (b*ratyhera*), The second part consists of psychological discipline, namely, collection of the mind and its abstraction from external activity (*dhaarana*) and meditation to understand the Real ((*dhyana)*. These steps ultimately lead to absorption (*Samadhi*) of thought into Reality, of subject into object, for the realization of oneness of individual soul and the Universal Soul.(19)

It is further held that this discipline consists of complete mastery over one's mind and realize the unity of the Self and the Absolute. By discipline of the mind, the sense are merged into mind, mind into intuitive knowledge, intuitive knowledge into the great self, the great self into the Absolute.(20) This revelation of the

Absolute, which is experienced by an individual, obtains freedom from fetters and sorrows; sickness, old age, and death are overcome. *Atman* (soul) obtains *Samadhi* (absorption). In the state of *Samadhi* the consciousness of subject and object disappears and the state of selflessness is reached, which, in other words, means annihilation (gnosis) of the self in the Universal Self.

According to *Maitrayani Upanishad*, within man is seated *Atman* (soul) which is pure bliss; it is eternal and known by tranquility, self-restraint, patience and purity of body and mind.

The *Brahdaranyaka Upanishad* tells us that he who, having become calm, self-controlled, withdrawn, patient and collected, by intuitive knowledge or mystic sense, knows *Brahman* (God), or experiences that state of Supreme Sublime Bliss (*Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda*) sees the Self in his own self, sees all in the Universal Self and attains the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* – interminate Realization of the Formless One, a stage where there is no perception of the subject or of the object. (21)

The other alternative prescribed is to have discipleship of a teacher, or a master, or a Guru, who knows the ways; and cultivation of certain qualities. (22)

Guru, meaning teacher, is always considered as the indwelling Divine who teaches all through the gentle voice of conscience. He is the enlightener of the inner-self of the disciples. He sets the path for a disciple which helps the latter to proceed and make gradual progress on the way of reaching the Lord and have communion with Him. It is by constant companionship and imparting of necessary knowledge that the supreme state can be attained by the disciple. In order to fix in him what the Guru wishes to, he always gives to his disciple wonderful illustrations and appropriate parables. In this way, convictions come to the disciple direct from the heart. It is also ingrained in the disciple that in the company of the Guru, mind remains firm and does not hanker wildly, the soul attains happiness, disciple endures even the unendurable, acquires all the virtues, follows the path of strict morality and becomes aware of the Supreme Reality. It is the Guru who leads the disciple to the truth and enables him to develop an indestructible love of God. It is the Guru whose transmuting spirit changes mortals into God-like saints.

This is the Supreme object of the philosophy of the Vedantic mysticism. In this manner not only a philosophy is propounded but a practical course of life and the goal to be obtained is laid down by the Upanishads.

The Upanishads seek Truth and pursue it by intuitive reason or mystic sence. This has universal application as because knowledge of the self and the Truth is the right of every human being irrespective of caste, creed or colour; none should be deprived of it. It is quite reminiscent of the universal message enshrined in the teachings of Shrimad Bhagvad Gita.

According to the Upanishads, life is a pilgrimage and man is a pilgrim. The point of departure of the pilgrim is his natural state. Therefore a firm faith and a strong conviction are the pre-requisites of the pilgrims who are of stout heart and do not tire easily; who have undergone rigorous discipline only they can reach the top – desired goal *Moksha*, and merge in the Supreme.

This doctrine of annihilation in God of Vedantic mysticism is found in the fundamental teachings and practices of *Tasawwuf* (Sufism) right from the time of Bayazid (Abu Yazid) Bistami (d.875 A.D.) onwards. It is said that *FanabilTawhid*, which subsequently become one of the Sufi doctrines, Bistami learnt from his Indian teacher, Abu Ali Sindi, or of Sind, to whom, in exchange, he taught the Hanafite canonical law. The influence of Vedantic mysticism in *Tasawwuf* can be traced to this common belief.(23)

III

Sufism is akin to Advaita Vedanta and there are significant similarities in their ontology. Their belief lies in the non dual Absolute and that the Truth (***Haqiqa***) lies at the heart of all things and yet it is beyond all determination and limitation. Rumi feels that it is an illusion to see human beings as different or separate from nature and the universe. God said, "My earth and my heavens contain me not, but the heart of my faithful servant contains me". (24) He viewed the world as a reflection of God. He compared consciousness to a cup and unconsciousness to the ocean: individually we are like the cup but all of us together with nature are the ocean, unconscious reality, or God. If we have the ability to lose the limitation of the cup by freeing the self we can be reunited with the ocean of being, which would enable us to lose the anxieties of separation, loneliness and isolation and gain the permanency of the everlasting ocean. (25)

The philosophy of Advaita Vedanta is not easy to explain. Briefly Advaita means 'Non Dual' which refers to Absolute Monism. The most famous Advaita thinker has been Shankaracharya of the eighth century A.D. According to him the most important underlying notion in all Vedanta schools is that man is suffering because he is caught in a never ending cycle of births and rebirths known as ***Samsara***. The ultimate quest of man is therefore to seek a way out of this bondage and attain liberation, ***Moksha***. It is the knowledge of true nature of self (***Atman***) and the Absolute (***Brahman***). A man who has reached this realization, not just from scholastic knowledge but through his own experience, is known as ***Jivanmukta*** and will not return to the cycle of rebirths. The unity between the true self and Universal Reality i-e ***Brahman*** is the highest reality.

> "In Truth these living creatures were born
> of Bliss, it is through Bliss that, having come
> into existence, they are kept alive, it is Bliss
> that they will all return." (26)

IV

From the foregoing it can be observed that Rumi's ***Tasawwuf*** and Vedantic mysticism have many points of similarity. Both teach this earthly life is only an interlude between two ends of a real life which is continuous and eternal. The central theme which runs through Rumi's ***Tasawwuf*** andVedantic mysticism is the search for what is Truth. It forces upon us the conviction of a spiritual reality, a timeless being, the object of philosophical quest. Both lead up to this Reality which is infinite existence and Absolute Truth. This aspect of realization is rare and simple and requires strict spiritual discipline, unbounded love and devotion, or guidance from a perfect preceptor.

In Rumi's writings, one can find numerous passages that glorify detachment and retreat from the physical and material world. The Sufis, like Vedantists, attach great significance to the love of God, and their sole concern is to be lost in the love of God. They hold that if men wish to draw near God, they must seek Him in the heart of men. Both Rumi's ***Tasawwuf*** and Vedantic mysticism assert that all differences which apparently are far from conciliation in reality do not exist. The clashes which occureveryday in the world are the result of ignorance and when ignorance is removed, clashes disappear and unity is experienced in diversity. Both care little for logical contradictions in the expression of their ideals. At the same time, both insist on having personal direct experience of Reality with the aid of intuitive reason, or mystic sense. The mystic idea that love divine is supreme and beyond all religious and social barriers is common to both. Both believe in the continuity and immortality of soul. The central theme in both is the evolution of man. Both argue that if by assimilation matter can progress to the state of manhood there can be no obstacle in the way of evolution of man to the Infinite Being by his acquiring the qualities. Both insist that truth is same everywhere, though it is known by different names in different languages; when the goal is one, it is immaterial whether one reaches it one way or the other.

Rumi's ***Tasawwuf***, like Indian Vedantic tradition, includes everyone under his umbrella. The world of Rumi is neither exclusively the world of a Sufi, nor the world of a Hindu, nor a Jew, nor a Christian, it is the highest state of a human being – a fully evolved human. As emphasized by Vedanta a complete human is not bound by cultural or other man-made limitations. Both have universal appeal and concur that all religions and creeds with their non-essential differences are but one Universal Religion.

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2. ***Mysticism***, E. P. Dutton (1930) p.9
.3. Chopra, R.M. ***Rumi: His Teachings And Philosophy***, p.32. (For Greater details about Rumi's teachings and philosophical rendering reference to this book may be made.)
4. Ibid., pp.21-22.
5. Ibid., p.70.
6. Ibid., p.21.
7. Ibid., p.70.
8. Ibid., 71.
9. Ibid., 72.
10. Chopra, ***Great Sufi Poets of The Punjab***, p.23.
11. Reference in this connection can be made to the philosophical systems of German philosopher Johann Fichte (1762-1814 A.D.) and French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941 A.D.).

12. Chopra, ***Rumi: His Teachings And Philosophy***, p.75.
13. Ibid., p.42.
14. Chopra, ***Great Sufi Poets of The Punjab***, pp.297-298.
15. Rig Veda (1.64.64). Also quoted in ***Great Sufi Poets of The Punjab***, p.24.
16. In 1650 A.D., fifty Upanishads were translated into Persian under the patronage of Prince DaraShikoh, the son of Emperor Shahjahan. From the Persian they were translated into Latin in 1801-1802 A.D. Schopenhauer (1788-1860 A.D.), the German philosopher, studied this Latin translation and in the later years declared: "In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life; it will be the solace of my death."
17. Swami Nikhilananda, ***The Upanishads***, p.46.
18. It is mentioned in the ***Taittriya Upanishad***. This Upanishad is regarded as a source – book of the Vedanta philosophy. It discusses the knowledge of Brahman (God), which alone destroys ignorance, the root of the phenomenal life; this is done through the explanation of the five sheaths which hide the Self, as

a scabbard hides a sword. It also teaches that Brahman (God) as the cause of the creation, continuance, and dissolution of the universe.

19. A careful study of the entire ***Swetasvatara Upanishad*** will show that, like the other principal Upanishads, it affirms, the nondual Brahman as Ultimate Reality.

20. In the second chapter of the ***Swetasvatra Upanishad***, suggestions are given for the practice of concentration and other disciplines of Yoga, which have been accepted by all the systems of Hindu philosophy.

21. The theme of the ***Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*** is the absolute identity of Atman (soul) and Brahman (God). This identity has been established by reasoning for the purpose of discovering Reality both from the philosophical as well as mystical points of view. According to this Brahman (God) is the Reality behind the universe, and ***Atman*** (soul) is the Reality behind the individual. The realization of the identity of the self and Brahman in a mystical experience establishes the existence of a Reality which is infinite, directly perceived, unlimited, and spiritual.

22. The *Maitrayani Upanishad*.
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7. *HINDUISM TODAY*

Published in February, 2009;
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In this book, the author has tried to recount and capture the basic principles, theoretical and practical aspects of Hinduism which have withstood the test of time, and has also given insight into the truth of its comprehensive universal spirit, its inherent toleration as a principle of spiritual life, and liberalism in its quest for ultimate reality. He has also explained as to how these principles can be helpful in shaping the new world order in the event of globalization. His approach to the subject has been lucid, devoid of all narrowness and obscurantism.

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In this book, Mr. Chopra has documented eminent poetesses of Persian, from the 10th century to modern times, who have made remarkable contribution to the enrichment of Persian poetry, literature and thought. He has also drawn attention to the contemporary poetesses who have fused the imagery of their tradition with modernist innovation to speak of love, loss, social mores, plight of women and human rights.

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In this monumental book, Mr. Chopra has explained how the Indo-Persian literature, developed between the 11th and the 19th centuries, constituted one of the greatest achievements of human creativity. In the beginning, growth, develpment and continuity in the multi-linguist and multi-cultural complexity of Indian subcontinent, it is unmatched in world literary history. And then set in decline to its glorious career; and yet it has bequeathed a great legacy in the growth and continuity of India's composite culture.

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The philosophical thought of Sikhism is a study of the fundamental values of human life and is the set of fundamental ideas that has directed the course of Sikhism over the last five centuries. It is a systematic study of currents of thoughts based on their scripture Sri Guru Granth Sahib which have influenced Sikhism. In this book it is explained by Mr. Chopra that the Sikh philosophy, expressed by Guru Nanak Dev and all the successive Gurus following him, aims at achieving divinity. The Sikh philosophy possesses a coherent doctrine, which integrates a great synthesis of all the aspects of human existence and can effectively guide the seeking man to find the fulfillment of his earthly pilgrimage.

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2, Beniapukur Lane, Kolkata – 700 014.
ISBN 978-81-89140-75-5
Pages : 435 Soft-cover; Price Rs. 599/-, US $ 25, L 20, Euro 22
678, Marshall House, 25, Strand Road, Kolkata – 700 001

For more than a millennium, the Persian language simultaneously thrived in Iran and India and the main reason for this is the rich classical Persian literature, especially classical Persian poetry which flourished continuous and uninterrupted. Between the tenth and the seventeenth centuries there were legions of poets of exceptional poetic talent, great insight, and uncanny genius who embellished Persian poetry with their master-pieces which has made classical Persian poetry as one of the greatest literatures of the world. Out of the multitudinous poets, description of about twelve most brilliant poets of classical Persian poetry has been given in this book by Mr. Chopra and are: Ferdowsi, Omar Khayyam, Nizami, Attar, Rumi, Sa'di, Hafiz, Jami, Saib and Qa'ani from Iran, and Amir Khusrow and Bedil from India. These poets have exercised profound influence on other literatures of the world by the nobility of their thoughts and rhythmic rendition of their poetry. It has been further explained that the chief merit of classical Persian poetry lies in the fact that it is full of love, deep feelings, highly didactic, profoundly spiritual which captivates the hearts of people and inspires them even today to recite it with great relish.

12. A STUDY OF RELIGIONS

Published by AnuradhaPrakashan,
New Delhi, in 2015.
Pages : 268; Soft-cover; Price Rs. 399/- US $ 16, L 12, Euro 14.
Hard-bound, Price Rs. 499/- US $ 20, L 14, Euro 16.
ISBN 978-93-82339-94-6
678, Marshall House, 25, Strand Road, Kolkata – 700 001

In this book, Mr. Chopra has discussed enduring question about eleven practising religions, human society, and the meaning individuals and communities make in life. The study of different religions also facilitates interaction with people of other religions and their cultural, historical, intellectual, and social phenomena. This subject has assumed greater importance in the contemporary world as we are living in pluralistic societies which now exist around the world and contain different religious groups. This book helps to understand people with different religious beliefs and knowing the fundamentals of their religions.

13. *SUFISM*

Published by AnuradhaPrakashan,
New Delhi 110 046 in 2016.
Pages : 438; Soft-cover; Price Rs. 799/- US $ 32, L 24,
Euro : 28
Hard-bound, Price Rs. 999/- US $ 40, L 28, Euro: 32
ISBN 978-93-85083-52-5
678, Marshall House, 25, Strand Road, Kolkata – 700 001

(Here is the review published in ***SUFI WORLD*** – Book No.66)

"This latest book by an octogenarian scholar, author of a dozen books, is an outstanding work. The author is MA in Islamic history and culture with additional qualification of law. He has carried the Sufi background and culture from his parents and inspired by the mystical sayings of Meher Baba. He has studied intensely Sufi literature besides about the life and works of great Sufi poets of Punjab, about Sikhism and Hinduism. He has widely travelled with love for literature and fondness for literary activities.

The expression in the book is lucid, crystal clear, spontaneous and well defined. The author needs to be congratulated for his stupendous effort in producing this book. The book is a must read for all those interested in subject of Sufism and for all libraries, research scholars and Sufi centers".

· *Editor* ***SUFI WORLD***

14. DIVE INTO HINDU PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

Published by Anuradha Prakashan,
New Delhi, in 2017.
Pages : 164; Soft-cover; Price Rs. 400/- US $ 16, L 12, Euro : 14
ISBN 978-93-86498-44-1
678, Marshall House, 25, Strand Road, Kolkata – 700 001

Hinduism is the world's oldest living religion. It is a rich collection of hundreds of spiritual, ethical and philosophical traditions followed throughout Asia for the last 7000 years. The inherent strength of Hinduism emanates from its thousands of years old philosophical and ethical principles which have generated two core beliefs of *tolerance* and *pluralism*. Hinduism is a diverse religious phenomenon which contains several key teachings of great value for the modern world.

The book covers the subject comprehensively and is a must for all those who wish to dive into Hindu Philosophy and Ethics and especially for those students and scholars who wish to study comparative religions.

15. REJOICING THE TWILIGHT - Spirituality for all

Published by Anuradha Prakashan,
New Delhi, in 2018.
Pages : 116; Soft-cover; Price Rs. 400/- US $ 16, L 12, Euro : 14
ISBN 978-93-88278-02-7
678, Marshall House, 25, Strand Road, Kolkata – 700 001

Twilight in general term, is the illumination by the sunlight scattering in the upper atmosphere, illuminating the lower atmosphere than the surface on earth is neither completely lit nor completely dark, which can be construed as a meeting of the light of the sun and the light of the human sacrifice. The purpose of human life is to sacrifice its whole towards realising its true divine higher self that which is verily the soul. The delight implies inner fathomless peace, and inner fathomless happiness in merging the soul in oneness which the divine blissful Supreme Infinite Soul. When the micro cosmic individual human soul and macro cosmic eternal Infinite Soul merge in oneness thereat reposes Truth. Viewing objectively, one realises that spiritual wealth is the real inexhaustible wealth. Divine knowledge is the real knowledge. The best course available to human individual is : realise the Eternal Soul and attain freedom, perfection and immortality.

In this book the author has tried to explain as to how all this can be achieved by individuals in as simple a manner as possible.